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**TRACTS**  
**FOR THE**  
**CHRISTIAN SEASONS.**



TRACTS  
FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

THIRD SERIES.

EDITED BY THE  
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VICAR OF KEMPSFORD;  
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

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VOL. II.

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER TO THE  
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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#### ERRATA.

- p. 607, l. 1, for "preparation" read "due preparation."  
 p. 617, l. 12, for "contact of" read "contact with."  
 p. 624, l. 20, for "through the year long" read "throughout  
 the year."

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

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### THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

IT is one of the fashions of the time to speak of representative men, men who concentrate in their own life and character those distinguishing peculiarities which are spread abroad over the age or the nation which we conceive them to represent. There are also representative days, representative events, representative transactions. These may not be seen in their full significance at the first, any more than a representative man is fully understood to be such even at the moment when he is most completely representing his epoch or his contemporaries. Some time must elapse, and the consequences of an event must have brought out its meaning, before it is possible for us

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to take in the proportion and the perspective on which the truth of the representation depends.

We have now come in the course of our Christian year to the great event of our Lord's final entry into the Temple. It is one of those events which, above all other, we must characterize as representative. It is marked by special meanings, it represents our Lord in a special character, and it calls our attention to special truths. Viewed rightly, it assumes also what we may almost call a central position in the whole history of God's dealings with the world. For it is not merely the introduction to the great climax of Christ's ministry on earth, but it marks the commencement of that great consummation prepared for in the Divine Mind, in heaven, before any Divine works began on earth: that great consummation towards which all the by-gone history of the world converges, and from which, as from a new creation, all the future of mankind has taken a fresh departure.

Every circumstance attending this final entry into Jerusalem shares in the mystic

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significance of the mighty time to which it is the immediate prelude. The years of the ministry are ended. The week of the new creation has begun. Throughout the life of Christ we have been on holy ground. Now He leads us into the holiest of all. Henceforward not a step but what some ancient prophecy is being fulfilled, some Messianic type realized, some word of elder ages interpreted, as Christ the King, and Priest, and Prophet takes His solemn way to the Temple of His Father.

Yet upon these we cannot dwell, except where one or another may help us towards the central truth.. Type and prophecy, and mystic psalm, are strewn around the path in rich profusion. Yet it is ours to note that, after all, they are but minor echoes of an eternal word which had gone forth before type and prophecy began ; of an eternal purpose of which type and prophecy were but partial revelations ; that eternal purpose of which in the fulness of the ages He now presents Himself as the long foreseen fulfilment.

*What, then, was the central act of this*

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day's great occurrences? what was it leading to? In a word, what did it represent, and what does it even now represent to us at this distance of time?

Let us first endeavour to answer these questions as best we can, and then proceed, in the second place, to unfold the teachings which the answer will involve.

To begin then:—The central act was that of Christ, presenting Himself, to God in the house of God; as the Lamb of God for the one eternal sacrifice; as the Lamb fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, for the world's redemption and atonement. All else is subordinate to this one conception. He, the Priest for ever, is leading up and presenting the Victim fore-ordained.

Not that we would draw our reader's minds away from the regal aspect of their Lord, received with royal honours by the people as He wends His way to the city of David. All this, and more, we would have them note and ponder. But the royal aspect itself is subordinate to the final action of the day's proceedings, although in popular acceptation it has usurped the foremost

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place. The royal procession to the *city* is secondary to the sacrificial presentation in the temple,—that solemn, marked, emphatic entrance into His Father's house, the one spot on all the earth which represented to mankind the presence-chamber of the Eternal, where He had set His Name.

Why do we assert this with such earnestness of emphasis? And why do we insist upon this as the special point in which this day's act is representative? We look before and after, and we find two things chiefly which interpret its representative meaning. There is the ritual of the Mosaic Passover, whose types here guide our view. There is the sacrifice of the Cross of Calvary, now four days distant, which throws its light back on this symbolic act of Christ the future victim.

As the Law demanded that the lamb ordained for paschal sacrifice should be selected four days before its offering, selected without spot or blemish, separated from all other, and presented for its sacred purpose: so He, the Lamb fore-ordained from the foundation of the world, was now presenting

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Himself without blemish and without spot, holy, separate from sinners, in preparation for the day, now four days distant, when through the Eternal Spirit, He the Priest for ever should offer Himself to God.

The time is at hand. The blood of the everlasting covenant is about to be shed. It is time to set apart and designate the destined victim. But the victim is none less than He who should fulfil every royal Messianic psalm, and prophecy, and type—the greater Son of David, whom David called Lord. Hence now for the first and only time He suffers the royal majesty to flash from out His voluntary lowness. He enters Jerusalem as her king, but only to lead the destined victim into the house which is the symbol of the presence of Him to whom the sacrifice is to be offered. He drives out of that house all that profanes the sanctuary now that the fore-ordained Lamb, the divine and perfect Lamb, is brought up to be presented to God in all its sanctity. The representative act is over, and the history of the day closes.

High above all accompanying fulfilments

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of type, and prophecy, and symbol, towers this sublime reality. It is the note of warning which announces the near fulfilment of the eternal purpose of the Father, wrought out through the Eternal Spirit by the visible action of the Eternal Son. It is Christ entering upon the central act of the world's mysterious history, fore-ordained from the beginning, fore-shadowed throughout the ages in every successive dispensation, and now at last approaching its divine accomplishment.

The entrance into the Temple is the presentation of the chosen Lamb. The Cross of Calvary is the consummation of the sacrifice. The new creation, inaugurated at Easter, completes the week and is the first-fruit of all.

As He was the Lamb fore-ordained in heaven before the first creation of the world was accomplished, so now He is the Lamb presented in the Temple before the new creation of the redeemed is achieved. The Cross and the Resurrection place the event in its true light, perspective, and significance. From them we learn to look upon Him to-

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day in that character in which He stood in those elder counsels of the Highest, whereby redemption was decreed from everlasting. They cast back our thoughts far beyond the intervening ages of dark sayings and shadows of the truth to the clear bright light of God's eternal will. They remind us of that will by which the Eternal Son, yet resting in "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was,"<sup>a</sup> was already "the Lamb slain," the fore-ordained Redeemer by way of sacrifice and death, of that creation which was still awaiting His creating word to call it out of nothing.

Thus much for the representative meaning of the day's event. What next are we to learn from it?

It teaches us two things chiefly.

First, it teaches us in what light a true conception of Holy Scripture would have us regard the ideas of sacrifice and of atonement. Secondly, it teaches us in what light to regard the progressive system of types and symbols which cluster round the idea of sacrifice during those ages which were to

<sup>a</sup> St. John xvii. 5.

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pass away before the actual Sacrifice of which they were the perpetual witness.

I. In the first place, then, it raises and ennobles all our thoughts of sacrifice, of atonement, of redemption. It teaches us to regard the idea of a restoration and a new creation accruing to man through the suffering and death of the Eternal Son, *not* in any sense as an *after-thought* of the Godhead following upon Satan's assault and Adam's sin, but as the exact contrary of all this, as an original and essential portion of the eternal counsel and purpose of the ever-blessed Trinity before the word went forth, "Let us make man."

This and no less are we bound to accept as the simple natural meaning of such phrases as those which we have been continually quoting throughout the preceding pages: "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world<sup>b</sup>"; "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world<sup>c</sup>"; and again the remarkable expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>d</sup>, by which Christ is said to have offered Himself to God "through the

<sup>b</sup> Apoc. xiii. 8.      <sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. i. 20.      <sup>d</sup> Heb. ix. 14.

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Eternal Spirit." There may be difficulties to our limited apprehension which follow from this idea, difficulties which we would be the last to ignore, to deny, or weakly to explain away. But what we insist upon is this, that the concurrence of these testimonies is a fact which cannot be overlooked, that they place this truth before us in a manner which defies contradiction, and that whatever subordinate difficulties it may involve, it harmonizes at once with all the deeper passages of Messianic prophecy, and at the same time with all the loftier conceptions of the human mind with respect to the Divine will and intelligence.

A thoughtful mind will recognise this last point easily and gratefully. Is not a *perfect* foresight one among our most primary conceptions of the mind of the Most High? *so* perfect, *so* all-embracing, that we feel that in using such a word as *foresight* we are but condescending to our limited habits of thought and speech; that it is but *our way* of shadowing forth that larger truth, that with Him there is neither before nor after, but that all things rest in one eternal present.

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And that which such Scripture phrases do for us is this, they harmonize our truest thoughts with their own view of God's divine procedure. The ultimate work of redemption and sacrifice *was* as fully present to the Divine Mind when (to speak after the manner of men) the first conception of creation rose before it, as fully and as distinctly as when the desolation of Eden was the signal for its commencement, or as when the Agony and the Passion were carrying it onward to its fulfilment. We must never separate the two works of creation and redemption. We must regard them as essentially bound up with each other from everlasting in the Divine intention,—twin thoughts from all eternity in the mind of the Everlasting,—unless it be still more true to look upon them as divers aspects only of the one same thought, even as they are assuredly but portions of the same vast enterprise of Divine love. It may be difficult for our limited intelligences to grasp the idea of their being thus parts of one single plan and thought. But we must remember that our intelligences *are* limited, that they are but the germ or

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bud of what they shall be ; that we are as yet upon no vantage-ground of observation, but standing in the midway valley between the two eternities, into both of which we peer darkly and mysteriously, knowing only that Love ineffable has placed us where we are, and that the same Love guides us onward into the light of His glorious presence.

For, mark next in further illustration of this line of thought, how emphatically we are taught that both of these Divine purposes, creation and redemption, are committed to the agency and operation of the same Divine Person—the Son. Here there is no division of operation :—this we can clearly understand. There is one agency throughout, as the purpose and conception was but one. We speak of “God the Father who created all the world ;” and, “secondly,” “the Son who hath redeemed us, and created all :” but in our Nicene Creed we are told that “it was the Second Person of the Trinity by whom [i.e. by the agency of] all things were made.” And in our Church Catechism.

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this we are but following the express declaration of Holy Scripture. St. John writes, “All things were made by Him, [i.e. by the agency of the Son,] and without Him was not anything made that was made<sup>f</sup>.” The same testimony recurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “By whom [i.e. the Son] He [i.e. the Father] made the worlds<sup>g</sup>.” Creation and redemption as they were one in the Divine design, so they are not divided in the agency of their execution. The restorer is no less than He who created. He who created, Himself repairs the breach. None but He who created can redeem; even as it is written, “I looked and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me<sup>h</sup>.”

We have dwelt the more upon this head because of the startling, and to some minds the embarrassing, contrast which obtains between the outward manifestations of the two offices of Creator and of Redeemer. Creation appeals to the imagination and the intel-

<sup>f</sup> St. John i. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Heb. i. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. lxviii. 5.

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as the supreme manifestation of power, of action, of control; redemption, as wrought out by sacrifice, a work involving every idea which is the exact opposite of all this. Yes, it is true. To our understandings the contrast is complete. For power, tears and death; for action, the extremity of suffering; for control, a perfection of submission.

What, then, are we to conclude? Surely this—that though there may be outward contrast, there is no inner inconsistency; that the essential completeness of the Creator's glory involves by some divine necessity this combination of what we think so strangely different; and that we must lay aside all fancies of our own as to there being anything irreconcilable in the contrasted manifestations of sacrifice and power. Are we not plainly called upon to take up the contrary idea, that sacrifice in its extremest form may be an idea upon which the Divine Mind can dwell with an infinite complacency, and that in the inner shrine, where abide the deepest thoughts of the Omniscient, *this* idea is placed high among those which it has been His pleasure to see carried out into

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conspicuous action before adoring angels by no less an agency than that of the Only Son?

Yes, redemption was contemplated along with creation; a work more glorious, inasmuch as it was the completion of that which, in time, it followed; and sacrifice is its appointed means, and therefore shares the glory of the redemption it effected. There is no *descent* in the order of the works of God. The best things last. The course is ever upward. Not as an *expedient* only, devised to meet a strange and sad emergency, but as an advance in the onward path of carrying out the one primæval purpose, did Christ put on the armour of redemption and bear the bitter cross. Surely it is more consistent with the mind of Holy Scripture to view the act of creation as the Divine preparation for the office of redemption, to regard our Lord as deriving an essential fitness for the second through accomplishing the first, than to follow any narrow notions of our own, that the way of sacrifice and of atonement is no way for the feet of Him who has made the earth His footstool.

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Doubtless even now, with all the full light of Scripture, of our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, and with all the evidences of the new creation in the work of the Spirit in the Christian Church, these truths are yet truths for faith rather than for demonstration and for sight. Yet, even as we know the second Temple to have been more glorious than the first, though the eyes of those who beheld its rise, wept over its apparent inferiority ; so we may believe that when He shall again appear it will be seen how far more glorious will be the temple of His redeemed Church, the new creation of the Lamb, than even the pristine excellence of the first creation of the Divine word.

These thoughts meet very pointedly all those recent tendencies to treat the connection between sacrifice and atonement as the product of the human self-accusing consciousness, instead of being, as the Church has ever held and as the Scriptures witness, the very foundation of that renewed communion between God and man, which replaces the mutual bond between the Creator and the created which was broken at the Fall.

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The term, “The *Lamb* slain,” &c.,—a sacrificial term—is one which of itself connects the idea of atonement with that of the sacrifice of Christ, and excludes the notion of its being a mere demonstration or exhibition of the magnitude of the Divine love. It asserts the fact of a real substitution, an actual, and in no way figurative, atonement and substitution having been determined from all eternity to be the ultimate ground of mutual connection or communion between God and man, and that this atonement should be the work of Him who was at first the Creator.

And if this be so, if atonement and sacrifice be thus the predestined link or bond replacing the broken link of original creation, how natural does it then appear that wherever, throughout the whole world, there has been *any* acknowledgment of *any* divinity, however distorted and erroneous, *there* we find also the fundamental notion of this bond and means of access. How natural, also, we say, that Holy Scripture should be as it were a history of the development of the true idea of sacrifice, shining more and

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more clearly as the final manifestation approaches and the day of the great consummation draws nigh.

If this be so, how naturally it explains the deep mark which these ideas of sacrifice and reconciliation have left upon the entire spiritual history of the whole human race. It was by the one creative act of the Second Person of the Trinity that man first came into being, and the unity of man's constitution everywhere bears witness to the unity of the whole race as springing from that one act of original creation. It was in virtue of the redemptive character of Christ, by the intervention of the divine atoning Lamb, of Him who before He was Creator already bore this office in the courts of heaven, that when man first sinned the arm of death was stayed, and a new grant of life made to the race which had forfeited the former. The fact of this substitution and atonement became the one sole basis of man's continued existence. Henceforward he lived not only as a created, but also as a redeemed being. Is it surprising, then, that we read the evidences of this one source of

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the continued life of humanity traced so deeply upon the common nature of all men everywhere? Just as the uniformity of man's natural constitution and endowments point to one source of his natural being, so also does the uniform and universal prevalence of this conception of sacrifice as connecting man with God bear witness to the common source of all higher and spiritual life, of all communion with the Maker and Sustainer of all.

There are exceptions, we shall be told: there are races of men who know not sacrifice, and to whom the idea of atonement is new and foreign. Yes, but these are races with whom the very idea of God Himself has almost, if not altogether, perished, and in whose language the Christian teacher finds no word to stand for the Deity either of natural or of revealed religion. There are races of men, long isolated from communion with their fellows, who would seem to have been sinking to even lower depths alike in intellect, in morals, in civilization, until at last the very thought of a God has all but vanished; and it is with such alone that the

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idea of sacrifice is a strange and a forgotten thing. Even the cold shadowy theories of the unsacrificing Buddhist make no exception to our broad generalization, for Buddhism itself is no primæval tradition, but what we may rather term a modern rationalistic reaction against the excessive sacrificial superstitions of those among whom the first teachers of Buddhism arose.

II. What place, then, does Holy Scripture occupy in the works and purposes of God? It is a history of the gradual unfolding of the divine plan by which God had determined from everlasting that His second work of new creation, or redemption, should be accomplished. It is the progressive *revealing* of the work of the Eternal Son as the Redeemer. And as such it is *sacrificial* to the very core. It is full of mystery, full of all that suggests questions which as yet we cannot answer, but so also is the work of creation. Why it should have pleased God to suffer His light to break so gradually upon His creatures' minds; why the agent of redemption should have tarried so long; why He should not have flashed upon the

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world with one mighty effort of redeeming love,—to all these and many similar questions we cannot furnish any present answer. We know not *why* it pleased the Almighty that any such work as redemption should be called for at all. But the fact is so: and Holy Scripture becomes the record of the way in which God has chosen that the *true* doctrine of sacrifice and atonement should win its way among His creatures in opposition to all the distorted ideas about it which prevailed wherever man was scattered. Covenant, sacrifice, atonement,—these are the three thoughts round which all God's dealings with man have circled from the first commencement of the second work of the Eternal Son. Covenant sealed by sacrifice; sacrifice the means of atonement; sacrifice, except as connected with the idea of atonement and covenant, a thing which man had no right to offer, for was not his continued existence upon the earth due solely to the virtue of the atoning character of "the Lamb," dependent entirely upon the covenant of redemption which it pleased the Eternal Son to offer to the lost and fallen?

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The first lines of the history of man after the Fall contain the germ of all which took four thousand years to develope, which it may occupy us through all eternity to understand and realize, — the offering Cain rejected, for it was presumptuous, the offering of Abel accepted because it witnessed to the blood of the everlasting covenant. The offering of Cain might have been seemed one yet unfallen, and who could come into his Creator's presence, unatoned for, to offer the pure symbol of a filial gratitude for God's natural gifts and goodness. But this was now impossible. This was now a thing of the past. The closed gates of Eden had shut it out for ever. Every approach to God must now be upon the basis of redemption, and bear the stamp and mark of a substituted victim. Man must come in a new character, i. e. as one included under the covenant which united him with the Lamb slain, *not* as included in the description of one created in the image, nor defaced, of God.

So Cain was rejected, and Abel accepted. Not for themselves alone was this histo-

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written, but to mark the law of the new era, the commencement of the life of man under the law of redemption which replaced the by-gone state under the law of creation. And so in Cain and Abel we see more than two contrasted individuals. They are types and patterns of the two great classes into which mankind have ever been divided. They represent those who think they may yet come boldly before God in virtue of that divine Image in which man was originally created, and those who accept the position of the new law of redemption and approach Him in virtue of the new covenant of sacrifice.

There are those who even now would take their stand upon the consciousness they feel that they have yet something left in them of the divine Image in which man was originally formed; that though fallen it is not utterly destroyed, and that through what yet remains they can yet hold converse with the Father of spirits and live.

Are there any of our readers who have thought this a higher standing-ground and nobler than that which Scripture and the Church assign to those who have been

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bought with a price? We can understand the feeling. We can admit that it proceeds from sentiments far above the mere vulgar impatience of the restraints of religion or indifference to the high requirements of Christian holiness. But we can hold no parley with it. It rests upon a conception which is utterly and absolutely false. Redemption was Christ's noblest work. The position of men united with Christ is the highest of which humanity is capable, so far as we yet know. Dark and mysterious as is the way of sacrifice, we may be sure that it is but "dark with excess of light," since it is the path of Him who is the true Light. The highest dignity of which man is capable on earth is when he empties himself of all self-imagined glory and all notions about natural aspirations after excellence, takes his stand upon the Rock of Redemption, and prays to be able to say with truth,  
**—I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.**

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## MONDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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### THE TYPE OF THE OFFERING OF ISAAC.

WE concluded our last Tract with a brief allusion to the contrast between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Our object was to point out the way in which that contrast illustrated our great subject of the new creation of man as effected by the redeeming work of Christ. And here the question will arise,— did Cain and Abel fully understand this contrast? It is not altogether unimportant for us to remark, that whether it were so or not affects our general argument very little indeed. How far the *full* signification of “the lamb” was revealed to those primitive worshippers we do not know, and we dare not guess. Whether it was offered by the direct command of God, and with God’s own word to ex-

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plain its meaning, is a question which has always divided theologians. For all this the fact remains:—the fact that the one was rejected and the other accepted; the fact that the one sacrifice exhibited faith, and that the other did not; the fact that the offering of a lamb was the proof of Abel's faith. Here, then, among whatever elements of uncertainty, we have this one standing-ground of fact. It is certain that the act of sacrifice was one in which these two worshippers were tried and tested as to the rectitude of their hearts before God. It was an act in which there was a right way and a wrong. And wherever there is a right and a wrong, there also we shall find some eternal and essential distinction, and not merely an outward and apparent diversity of form. Cain and Abel, then, were the two first human beings born under the new state of things which came in after Adam had forfeited the prerogatives of his original state. Cain and Abel stood upon the earth by virtue *not* of the broken covenant of creation, as Adam before he sinned, *but* by virtue of the new covenant of redemption. But for this they

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could never have lived at all; but for this the sentence of death had done its work at once, and Satan's malice had triumphed even within the precincts of Eden; but for this death had followed instantly upon the heels of sin, and claimed his victim without reprieve or respite. So, then, the eldest-born of Adam, as well as all his subsequent posterity, received the gift of life upon a new footing. They bore redeemed lives from the first; lives redeemed by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, or they had never lived at all. Henceforward, therefore, every conscious act of worship must be made under the recognition of this divine fact. It was the law of existence; it must also be the basis of worship. The sacrifice of the lamb expressed this; the offering of the fruits of the earth did not. Hence the acceptance of the one, and the rejection of the other.

Now it matters very little whether God had previously commanded the sacrifice of the lamb, or whether the two men chose their respective modes of worship and God gave His overt sanction *after* the event in-

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stead of laying down the law before it. Either way, the men were tested; either way, in the end God's will was shewn; either way, the offered lamb was expressive of the true position of the human worshipper towards the Divine creator in His new work and character of a redeeming Saviour; either way, it was expressive of the fact that only under a covenant of redemption could the offerer expect or ask the continued love and care and protection of the Almighty. So God accepted the lamb; and thenceforward the *lamb* is the standing symbol and type of the redeeming Christ.

It is something to feel that this was so from the very first. There is so much that is fearful about the history of the Fall:—God's righteous anger; man quitting Eden for ever; return impossible; a threatening glare upon his outward path flung from the flaming sword behind him. But a figure comes between. The shadow of the slain Lamb falls along the lengthening way, and within that shadow man may cross the outer wilderness to a nobler Eden than he leaves.

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Thus much to illustrate the manner in which the two ideas of sacrifice and of covenant have been connected from the very first in the Scripture history. It will now be our object to consider some of the chief types which that history offers of the one Sacrifice on which all covenant between God and man has rested. We must therefore pause a moment to consider the plan and purpose of Scripture history itself. It is the fashion with some to speak of Holy Scripture as a collection of Books without mutual connection or interior unity. Those who reject the central idea of a Divine redemption must necessarily think thus of Holy Scripture. There is one idea throughout it; one clue, without which it is indeed a labyrinth.

*Holy Scripture is, in effect, the history of a covenant of redemption to be effected by sacrifice.*

We do not mean that it is merely the history of the way in which redemption was at last wrought out by the Divine Redeemer. It is this; but it is more. It is also the history of the successive steps by which it

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pleased God gradually to teach mankind the exact nature of that link which unites God and man *still*, in spite of the breach which was caused by the Fall. In other words, it is not only the history of redemption, but it is also the history of God's way of gradually unveiling the *nature of redemption*. And the first broad general truth to be observed is, that from the beginning and ever after the two ideas of covenant and sacrifice go together. And not this only, but they grow and expand together. Every renewal, enlargement, and extension of God's covenant is accompanied by some fresh extension of the law of sacrifice which speaks of the one only ground upon which "covenant" between God and man proceeds. How was it after the flood?—Renewed covenant on God's part; sacrifice, yea, "of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl," on the part of Noah. So also in the case of the earlier promises to Abraham. We trace the path of promise by the footprints of sacrifice, and heathen history shews how deeply this truth was engraven on the heart of man, and echoes the lesson

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of the patriarchal times. With the heathen, however, there was no ever-brightening promise, no continually expanding covenant. Hence heathen sacrifice and Scriptural sacrifice have exactly opposite histories,—the Scriptural sacrifices becoming ever more numerous, more full of meaning, more suggestive, as they draw nearer to the great Sacrifice of all; the heathen sacrifices thinning out into a meaningless ritual as the primitive truth on which they were founded fades away in the forgotten antiquity of their origin. The utmost value of the study of heathen sacrifice is found in tracing it *upwards* until it gives its echo of the patriarchal covenant. The charm and interest of the study of Scripture sacrifice is to trace it *downwards*, to mark the solemn partings in the clouds of Providence, which enable man to gaze up more and more clearly into the light of the Divine mystery which in the end of the ages should be consummated at Calvary.

And this explains the marvellous succinctness of the earlier course of the sacred history. It is *not* the history of men, and nations, and empires. It *is* the history of

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covenant. Adam to Noah, and Noah to Abraham; each interval so long in time, so short in narrative. Why? because events were few? Surely no. But because *new* transactions between God, on the one hand, and universal humanity on the other, had been far between, and these are the landmarks of a history which records the mutual intercourse of earth and heaven.

Thus, then, touching lightly on the sacrifice of Noah, and making a mere passing allusion to the renewed sacrifices of Abraham on each occasion when God renewed His promises, we come to that great crisis in the history of sacrifice which stands midway in the world's history between the primitive sacrifice of Abel and the sacrificial ritual of Moses: we mean of course the sacrifice of Isaac. Note, then, that it stands midway in meaning as well as midway in time. The order of meaning is clear. First, the simple sacrifice of Abel and of those who followed him. This expressed the new ground of hope and of covenant, and connected the *idea of sacrifice* with the primæval promise. But it explained nothing. It

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tested the obedience and trust of the worshipper, and there it ended. Next, the offering of Isaac, which sets forth not merely the *idea* of sacrifice as the ground of covenant, but the very image of the ultimate Offering. It embodies the idea: it reveals that the victims slain in ordinary sacrifice were representatives of a reality, and not merely of a doctrine; representatives of One born under a peculiar promise and for a peculiar end, long-expected, divinely-given, "a Son given," Only, well-beloved, representative of the whole race, voluntarily offered by a Father's hand, nay, freely offering Himself as He consents to the binding of His unresisting form. Seen by our later knowledge the type in Isaac is complete. The one Sacrifice to which all slain lambs pointed is pourtrayed. Later sacrificial institutions add nothing to the fulness of this sublime prophecy in action. Nor can they. For, thirdly, the Mosaic ritual and sacrifices occupy an altogether new and peculiar position in the Divine teaching about sacrifice. The offering of Isaac had set forth completely the fact that all sacrifices pointed to some nobler

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offering, but it contained no teaching whatever as to *how* the benefits of that more worthy Sacrifice accrued to those who offered its typical representatives. *This* is the peculiar office of the Mosaic system. It unfolds, explains, and illustrates the manner in which the various graces of God through sacrifice meet the various needs of fallen and redeemed humanity. There is a parallel between the Old Testament and the New. As in Isaac Abraham saw the day of Christ, the coming Sacrifice; so in the Gospels Christ, the actual Sacrifice, is historically manifested. And as the Epistles of St. Paul *explain* the application of the Gospel to the heart and conscience of the baptized, so did the Mosaic institutions set forth *in type* the application of the one sacrifice to the actual case of man. The functions, therefore, of the Mosaic types, and of the offering of Isaac, are essentially distinct. It is true that here and there they fill up the accessories of the pictured prophecy of the Cross, and, as in the case of the paschal lamb, foreshew some final details of the great consummation. But of Christ *Himself*, of the exalted nature and

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voluntary suffering of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the sacrifice of Isaac is the complete and crowning type.

We are absolutely bewildered to know how in our short space we can even enumerate the multitude of details in which this great event in the history of sacrifice sets forth the eternal purpose of the Father for the redemption of mankind.

Let us keep to those points in which it seems to carry forward the lesson which was commenced in the earlier sacrifices, from that of Abel downwards.

There are two thoughts round which all the details of its teaching group themselves. The first is, the true *dignity of sacrifice*; the second is, the merely representative character of the sacrifices which men were required to offer; and if we may add a third, it will be that the sacrifices of men derived all their significance from their being the representatives of some true *Divine sacrifice*. All earnest worshippers must have felt the inherent insufficiency of the ordinary victims to deliver or to redeem. The horrid rites of human sacrifice testify to this. If sacrifice

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were to be a *power* it must consist in something greater than the bull, the goat, the lamb. Yet sacrifice was a divinely sanctioned institution. Surely there must be *some* inherent *power* in the sacrifices they were called upon to offer? So men argued, and so they were led to offer their best. The blood of sons and of daughters flowed freely. There was a secret error corrupting the Divine institution of sacrifice. Some new teaching was needed to save the true worshipper from its snare. This new teaching we see in the sacrifice of Isaac. No sacrifice as offered by man possessed any *power* at all. Sacrifice as a *power* was not man's work at all: sacrifice as a *power* was God's work. It was the means whereby God the Son was to effect the new creation of the world. Sacrifice as offered by man was an expression of faith. It expressed *man's faith* in *God's work*. The only sacrifice which could *effect* anything must be one infinitely transcending the best that man could find to offer. Such, briefly, was the first great lesson involved in this remarkable event. Look at what Isaac was, and what he represented.

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Remember that thus he depicted the kind of sacrifice which God demanded; and then that God having demanded such a sacrifice, would not suffer Abraham to consummate it even in type any further than by that of the substituted lamb, the old primæval type which now comes out with the deeper meanings shed around it by this sacrifice of Isaac. Look at what Isaac was; how infinitely greater than any of the greatest and best which any other man had to offer either of sons or daughters. In the *value* of Isaac we see God sanctioning the feeling of the human mind, that *if* sacrifice were a *power*, the material of sacrifice must be something beyond the ox or the lamb. There we see God trying the faith of Abraham, trying whether he had trust enough in the Divine appointment of sacrifice to stop short of nothing in the fulness of his obedience. But we note that God goes no further than to test the patriarch's faith. When that had been fully tested another lesson must be taught. Even Isaac is only a *type*. The utmost conceivable human offering is but a witness to that Divine

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sacrifice in which the real *power* lay. And as an expression of faith the lamb was enough. But all "lambs" hereafter would inherit the added meaning which belonged to that which Abraham "offered up as a burnt-offering in the stead of his son."<sup>\*</sup> The true *dignity of sacrifice* is vindicated, while the representative meaning of the institution of sacrifices is confirmed.

For Isaac was, indeed, the utmost conceivable sacrifice which could be found on earth. The flower of all the earth at that time was he,—the channel of the Divine blessing to all nations of the earth. And thus in his peculiar dignity he becomes the most speaking type of the nature and dignity of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Let us touch upon some of the particulars of the peculiar position which Isaac occupied, and by which he sets forth the peculiar characteristics of Him who was to be the Sacrifice with power.

First, Isaac is not to be regarded as an individual only. In him was included the whole race of God's chosen people. The chil-

\* Gen. xxii. 13.

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dren of Abraham are the accepted type of the Church of the redeemed. They in their career shadow forth the spiritual history of the Church of Christ. Now the whole race of Israel was at this time included in Isaac, even as in Christ the whole Church of the redeemed was included when He offered Himself to God.

“In Isaac shall thy seed be called” answers exactly to the prophetic utterance of Christ, “I and the children whom God has given Me.” The whole typical Church of the Jews had its existence through the sacrificed Isaac, even as the whole Church of the baptized is founded upon the one foundation of the crucified Christ. Here then, in the first place, the *comprehensive* character of Isaac is distinctly typical of the position of our Lord as “Head over all to the Church which is His Body.” Secondly, our Lord Himself was *appointed* for our sacrifice by the Divine will and counsel. He *became* our sacrifice and our representative *through* partaking our nature, i.e. through becoming *human*, and this human nature He took by the direct exercise of a Divine power. In

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every one of these particulars Isaac is typical of our Lord. His very existence was owing to a direct interposition of a Divine power. As of Christ it is said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a *Son is given*," so of Isaac we must say that he was emphatically "a given son."

His very name, Isaac, "laughter," is the perpetual memorial of the *supernatural* gift of this given son, whose actual birth long expected, and apparently long delayed, is in this delay typical also of the long ages which were to elapse between the primæval promise and the ultimate manifestation of the Messiah. And being such, Isaac was "chosen" of God to be the peculiar type of the Redeemer, both as the sacrifice and as the foundation of the new creation. God "chose" Isaac to be the typical victim. There is an especial emphasis laid on this fact that Abraham was divinely guided to this great action. It was God's will and counsel. Isaac was chosen of God for the sacrifice. As Christ is called the "Lamb of God," i.e. God's Lamb, God's sacrificial Lamb, the Lamb which "God will provide,"

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and not man, for the ultimate Sacrifice, so Abraham's words, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb," point to the fact that the "providing" an adequate sacrifice, a sacrifice which could be sufficient for the eternal purpose which sacrifice was to fulfil, *must* be God's work and not man's. Hence Isaac was *God's* choice for sacrifice:—chosen as including all those who were to be included in the covenant of sacrifice, chosen also as a voluntary sufferer, one who went freely to the sacrifice, and not merely unwittingly, as the unconscious lamb which could bear no voluntary part in the sacrificial rite. The parallel is marvellously perfect in these respects. As Christ is called "elect" (chosen), so Isaac was "chosen," or elect. As of Christ we read, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, that I should fulfil Thy will, O My God: I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart<sup>b</sup>," so Isaac's free submission is carefully kept in view throughout. As the will of God the Father and the will of God the Son co-operate in the work of the *redeeming*

<sup>b</sup> Ps. xl. 9, 10.

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sacrifice, so there has always seemed to us an especial depth and tenderness of meaning in the *twice-repeated* phrase, so “they [Abraham and Isaac] went both of them together.” “Both together.” They two and none other. The servants had accompanied them thus far. They were left behind at the mountain foot. What followed does indeed seem to lead us into the secret place of the counsels of the Most Highest, into the interior unity of purpose and of operation of the One Godhead of the Father and of the Son, into the mystery of redemption as the *conjoint work of both*, into which no created being can look undazzled, and wherein none even of the highest hierarchy of heaven can bear a part.

“So they went both of them together<sup>c</sup>.” They went for sacrifice. The son looked round for a victim. There was none. “I looked and there was none to help. I *wondered*, and there was none to uphold<sup>d</sup>.” The answer expressed all. Man could provide no fitting victim. “God will provide<sup>e</sup>.” “Therefore Mine own arm brought salva-

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xxii. 6 and 8.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. lxiii. 5.

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tion." So they went both of them together. The servants in these old patriarchal times were part of the clan or household of their chief; born in the house; not mere hirelings; yet they were left behind. It reminds us of our Lord's *actual* solitude in His last hours of sacrificial suffering. There were those who had accompanied His journey, the three days, a day for a year, of His journey to the foot of the Cross. He had called them "friends," for they were more than "servants," and they had "continued" with Him in His "temptations."<sup>1</sup> Yet this weak human nature could not continue with Him in His last ascent to the supreme height of His divine endurance. *Alone* He trod "the winepress," and yet in His own words, "I am *not* alone, for the Father is with Me."<sup>2</sup> So it was also when Abraham and Isaac "went both of them together."

Even the outward manifestations of the way of sorrows have their suggestive parallels in this ascent of Moriah by the typical son, where everything seems to glow with

• St. John xv. 15.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xvi. 32.

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a sacramental character. "Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it upon Isaac his son<sup>h</sup>." In the Jewish commentaries prior to our Lord's day this sentence is explained by reference to the custom of condemned men bearing their cross to the place of execution. "And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called ... Golgotha: where they crucified Him<sup>i</sup>."

Here we must stop, for space would fail us to pursue further the yet additional teachings and parallels which are to be found in this history. It is a *risen* Christ on whom our hopes are based, and so St. Paul directs our minds to Isaac as "a figure," not only of the sacrifice, but also of the resurrection of the Redeemer<sup>k</sup>. It will be enough if we have led our readers to feel that as the Israel according to the flesh is a true type of the Church of the baptized, so in Isaac we have a complete type both of the nature of sacrifice, and of Him who alone can offer any efficient sacrifice at all.

<sup>h</sup> Gen. xxii. 6.

<sup>i</sup> St. John xix. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. xi. 19.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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TUESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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## THE TYPE OF THE UPLIFTED SERPENT.

IN our last Tract we endeavoured to explain the position which the sacrifice of Isaac filled in the progressive unfolding of God's eternal purpose of redemption *by* sacrifice.

We have seen the magnificent vindication of the true dignity of sacrifice, and how nothing which man had to offer could do more than express his *faith* in that which must be God's work, and God's alone. We have seen how it was ordained that as the Church of the redeemed derives her supernatural life from One voluntarily offered, who rose again by His own Divine power, so the typical Church of the chosen people derived its existence from one who was a voluntary sacrifice, and was given back

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again "in a figure<sup>a</sup>" from the dead. And now we go a step farther. Time passes onward, and with it God's providence and teaching too. The children of the sacrificed and restored Isaac have become a nation. They have been received into covenant with God at Horeb, and the giving of the law which represents the Christian Pentecost is accomplished. The typical Church is fully organized as well as founded, it is going upon its way, and we come now to that fresh type of the wilderness which represents the ever-present power of healing which issues from the Cross of the crucified Redeemer.

The history of the Jews *as a whole* is typical of the history of the Church *as a whole*. But a whole is composed of many parts; and each portion or department must be separately grappled with and understood, if the ultimate completeness is to stand distinct and clear before us. The history of the Jews *in the wilderness* is such a portion or department of this typical history. It exhibits them in an altogether peculiar posi-

<sup>a</sup> Heb. xi. 19.

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ion, under circumstances which never before occurred, and which never after were repeated. The Jews *in the wilderness* represent the Church of Christ specifically in her *militant* aspect.

The parallel is that of the Church warring against interior evil, against the spiritual enemies of sin and faithlessness within herself, in her own members, largely hindering the growth of the renewed life which she derives from her crucified and risen Lord. The parallel is wide and comprehensive. It embraces every phase and change of the spiritual life of the Church at large, and of the individual Christian by himself. Our sins, our falls, our failures, our want of faith, our murmuring weakness, our blindness to our spiritual privileges, the strange way in which we ignore the facts of our high calling and shut our eyes to the large means given whereby we might attain the holiness to which our Saviour summons us,—all these are acted out in living form before us by that strange people in the wilderness, escaped indeed from Egypt, but by no means escaped, as yet, from the influence which their long

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sojourn under an alien rule had exerted upon their character and temper.

There is much in Holy Scripture in the interpretation of which a reverent mind will use a guarded caution. Here we have no doubt at all. It is not only that these typical meanings are drawn out so largely in some of the New Testament Epistles: our Lord Himself has fixed the meaning of two of the most marked features of this typical history. These are the manna and the uplifted serpent. And between these two which our Lord has chosen to apply and explain, there is sufficient connection to make it worth while noticing, not only how they are connected, but how the one balances and answers to the other.

Each of these is connected with the truth that from Christ Himself proceed the spiritual energies of the regenerate life of those He has redeemed: in the former case by way of continual support, in the latter by way of remedial agency. The manna exhibits Christ Himself as the spiritual *sustenance* which renews His militant people's *strength*, the latter exhibits Christ crucified

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as the spiritual *medicine* which renews His suffering people's *health*.

Food and sustenance are not enough. The life and health of the regenerate soul are weakened not only by the natural outgoings of strength which follow all the activities of *created* life. There are sicknesses also of the soul, there are wounds which accompany a state of strife and combat. The life and health of the redeemed soul is still threatened by the plague and wound of sin. *Remedies* are needed.

So with this typical Church in the wilderness. It was not enough that "He gave them food from heaven." No doubt it was their fault and sin that it was so. But so it was. They were perishing because of their sin. "Much people of Israel died<sup>b</sup>." Then the uplifted serpent meets the new emergency. The dying look on it and live. Christ crucified is the spiritual medicine for the soul's utmost sickness: the healer of the deadliest wound which sin and Satan can inflict.

Thus ere the history of the wilderness

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xxi. 6.

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closes, it also contributes to the typical teaching of the meanings and the powers of that sacrifice which underlies the whole history of God's dealings with man since the Fall of Adam. The shadow of the great Sacrifice is upon us still. Out of Sacrifice sprang the new creation; out of Sacrifice comes the food of souls; out of *Sacrifice* a healing virtue issues, the spiritual medicine for those whose regenerate life is weak and failing, and which might otherwise sink under the diseases which have not yet been utterly expelled.

The full explanation of this type of the uplifted serpent will require some notice of the circumstances which preceded it, together with a consideration of the question, *How* could such a symbol as that of the brazen *serpent* be a type of *Christ* at all? Let us look at the circumstances which preceded it.

We have said that in the uplifted serpent we see Christ crucified as the healer of the wounds and sicknesses of the soul. Now the wounds and sicknesses of the soul are sins; more particularly those which

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we designate as sins of the heart, i.e. those tempers and conditions of mind out of which external acts of sin proceed.

The faults and errors of the Jews in the wilderness are the types and patterns of the sins of Christian men: those sins of which we are guilty *after* our reception into the full spiritual privileges of Christ's Church and communion; those sins by which we are in danger even at the last of becoming backsliders, castaways, and lost. This is the case especially with the sins and murmurings which immediately preceded this last greatest type of our Lord's sacrificial blessings, which, so to speak, *called it forth*, even as a great emergency produces unwonted effects to counteract it.

The merely outward history of the preceding period is remarkable. There had been much to try the patience of the people, if not their faith. They had imagined themselves immediately about to enter the promised land by its southern frontier, when the King of Edom refused to give them passage<sup>c</sup>. A map will shew in a moment

<sup>c</sup> Numb. xx, 18, 21.

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how great a disappointment this involved. There was no resource left but to retrace their steps to the southward until they could turn the southern extremity of Mount Seir, and then advancing northward along its eastern slope, and along the eastern shores of the Dead Sea, reach the fords of Jordan opposite Jericho.

Neither was this all. Just as they were turning back, Miriam the prophetess died. Then while they were on their march Aaron also died. As the vast multitude passed beneath Mount Hor, the highest peak of the mountains of Seir, God called up Aaron into Mount Hor. There he died, and there beneath the mountain did the people mourn him thirty days<sup>a</sup>. Miriam was gone; Aaron was gone; a long and toilsome journey lay before them; “the soul of the people was discouraged because of the way<sup>b</sup>.”

Here was the trial. After long years of waiting, a new postponement of their hope, embittered also by the removal and the death of the priest and the prophetess who had been their companions during all the weary

<sup>a</sup> Numb. xx. 23—29.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. xxi. 4.

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way. Undeniably it was a great trial. The Psalmist had endured such when he exclaimed, “Mine eyes fail me for waiting so long upon my God.”

The spirit of the whole people gave way under it. “They spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for *there is no bread*, neither is there *any water*; and our soul *loathe*th this light *bread*!” So “they believed not God, and put not their trust in His help; though He had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven; and had rained down manna upon them for to eat, and gave them food from heaven; so that man did eat angels’ food.”<sup>1</sup> The nature of their sin is plain enough. Under a sharp trial of disappointment, and bereaved of those on whom they had relied for visible guidance, they ignored all that had been done for them. The supernatural powers and energies which were even then at work to sustain and support them were as nothing in the eyes of these mistrustful mur-

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 23—26.

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murers. And if they could not absolutely deny the existence of the sacred bread, they would turn upon it with contempt, as if it were hardly bread at all;—“Our soul loatheth this light bread.”

It is so now. When men mistrust God they seldom stop there. They go on to forget what He has done for them. They go on to disbelieve that He is doing anything for them. They see no grace in Sacraments, no spiritual energies at work for their support, or sustenance, or guidance.

And then from an insolent mistrust it is but a short step to a miserable despondency. We have doubted the spiritual grace by which alone we live. The shield of faith is thrown aside, we are exposed to the assault of the enemy. The “fiery serpent” is upon us, and it is well if we are not like the “much people of Israel which died.”

For this is the true meaning of the sequel: “He sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died <sup>b</sup>. ” The sin consists in an in-

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xxi. 6.

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solent unbelief, an unbelief which went the length of accusing God falsely. *The deadly bite of the serpent was but the result of the completed act of unbelief and accusation of God.* From the beginning of the Bible to the end of it the *serpent* is the symbol of *Satan*. Satan is the *deceiver* and the *false accuser*. Satan is the false accuser of God. He puts accusing thoughts of God into our minds, and blinds us to the perception of the actual gifts and graces we are enjoying as Christ's redeemed, at the very moment of our mistrust. It was so in the original temptation. Satan *accused* God falsely to Eve, as though God were capable of a jealousy of His own creatures, and seduced her from her trust while she was in the very midst of Paradise. It was the same sin now. The Israelites charged God foolishly even while nourished by angels' food. They approached perilously near to absolute apostasy.

So, as they sinned after the fashion of the *serpent's* temptation, they suffered from the *serpent's* bite. They had put themselves into the position of God's accusers; they

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experienced what it was to be given up to the power of the arch-accuser. They charged God with neglecting to provide for them, and they were suffered to feel something of what would follow if God took them at their word, and withdrew His sustaining and protecting hand.

The deadly wound of the serpent's bite represents the palsy of all spiritual life, which results from a blindness to our spiritual privileges, and an unbelieving ingratitude and murmuring against God. In this way the Israelites were dying of their sins. Let us now turn to God's remedy.

It is an old saying that man's extremity is God's opportunity. There is a sense in which this history would seem to be an example of the saying. As the Israelites would appear to have gone very near to the utmost limit of the human power of sinning, so God gives now the most vivid type of His salvation which the whole history of the wilderness contains. It is the one type which Christ Himself has chosen to set forth His power and will to save and heal a world lying in wickedness. "Not to condemn but

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to save" is the object of His mission, and when He would express this most clearly He selects this type of the uplifted serpent to set forth the manner and the fulness of His saving work. All who looked upon the uplifted serpent were healed. Why? *It was the restoration of trust.* The uplifted serpent represented the power of God to slay the serpent, to destroy the serpent's work, to annul the severance which the serpent had made between God and man by his false accusation. Nay, more, it represented that God the Redeemer was *already* victor over Satan the seducer, and that the power of God the victor was present to heal all who, from whatever cause, had come under the malign influence, the seductions, and the torments of the vanquished enemy. "Not to condemn but to save;" the uplifted serpent is Christ the Healer.

But it is by way of sacrifice still. The healing virtue issues from the *crucified* Redeemer, and it is peculiarly noticeable that this is the first type which sets forth with absolute clearness the *manner* of the sacrifice to which we turn our eyes and live. So the

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question arises *how* can the *serpent*, symbol of Satan and of sin, be a type of *Christ*. Every one can see that the *uplifting* of the serpent is a type of the *crucifixion* of our Lord, but how is the uplifted *serpent* a type of the crucified *Christ*?

Surely this type is intended not only to reveal the manner in which Christ the Eternal Sacrifice was to offer His life to God, but to reveal also as much as we can understand of the manner in which His sacrifice heals the diseases of our souls. It sets forth the actual doing away with sin which His atonement accomplishes. He who knew no sin "was made sin for us." He "bore our sins in His own body" on the cross. He was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," just as that which Moses lifted up was made in the likeness of the destroying serpent. So when Christ was crucified sin was slain, Satan vanquished, the serpent's head bruised. Let us look on this and put away all mistrust, and doubt, and despondency. Christ the Victor is Christ the Healer of all the wounds and sicknesses which those who follow His standard encounter in their militant state.

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One solemn thought occurs as we reflect on the crisis when this type was given. The journeyings in the wilderness were near their end when this last dread outbreak of unbelief took place. There had been many similar, but none so deep, so determined, so deadly. It was a complete denial of all faith in the supernatural agency of God in the sustenance and the direction of His Church. The long experience of forty years went for nothing. It suggests to us the falling away of the latter days to which we look onward with a trembling awe, that falling away which shall mark the last crisis of the Church's trial when her militant career is closing. A complete denial of the supernatural,—no grace in Sacra-ments, no Divine power in miracles, no per-ception of Divine authority in Scripture and the Church, these are the things which answer to the contempt for manna, the for-getfulness of miraculous deliverances, the murmurings against Moses, and the denial of the Divine authority by which he taught and ruled.

It was the last great outbreak of unbelief,

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and “much people of Israel died.” A falling away *shall* come. We know it *must*. But the Church in the wilderness fore-shadows the probation and the triumph of the mystical body of Christ upon the earth. *All* shall not fall away. There will be those who fix their eyes upon the Cross of Christ as the power of God present to heal and save; not as the subject for curious speculations as to theories of atonement, but as the rallying point of faith, the counterpart of the approaching sign of the Son of Man in heaven.—**SIT ANIMA MEA CUM ILLIS.**

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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### THE TYPE OF THE SCAPE-GOAT.

FROM the two great “types of the wilderness,” we proceed next to the two great “types of the covenant.”

The “types of the wilderness,” which occupied us in our Tract for yesterday, exhibit the practical working of God the Redeemer in (1.) sustaining and (2.) in healing the spiritual life of His covenanted people in their journey across the wilderness of life.

We come now to an altogether new department of our subject. The spiritual life of God’s people is based entirely upon God’s covenant of redemption. So we have said again and again, and therefore it is time that we should understand clearly what these words mean. What is the nature of this covenant? What are the conditions on

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which it rests? What benefits does it bring? Has God's great system of types any answer for these questions?

To this we answer, Clearly yes. As the types of the wilderness do their part in revealing Christ's practical working, so the types of the covenant unfold the nature and conditions of the covenant itself. They set forth the nature of the blessings which the covenant of God in Christ conveys, and they set forth also the manner in which those spiritual blessings accrue to or are appropriated by the members of Christ. This is the burden of their typical teaching for *Christians*,—first “the blessings of Christ's death,” then the way in which these blessings are applied to our spiritual well-being.

But we must remember that they were given first to *Jews*, and possessed also an earlier and primary operation for the Jews themselves. To the *Jews*, they taught, explained, and conveyed the blessings contained in the original covenant in *Isaac*; exactly as they teach us the blessings of our covenant in *Christ*.

Observe, then, that the covenant which

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came by Moses contained no new promise; but it confirmed, carried out, and applied the old. We might go farther and add that it expounded it, that it was a fulfilment of it, that it was in some sense *a revelation* of its meaning. But it was certainly no new promise. The promise was *already* complete.

The Israelites in their Egyptian bondage were already the covenanted people of God. They were already heirs of a promise already sealed, for in their veins was flowing the blood of Isaac, Isaac the sacrifice, Isaac restored again "in a figure" from the dead. Thus they represent precisely the position of the members of the Christian Church, heirs of a spiritual promise, because our renewed being is derived from the divine humanity of Christ, Christ the sacrifice, Christ risen again by divine power from the grave.

Such then was the case with the Jews in their worst estate in Egypt. No new covenant through Moses could elevate this high position. It was not to raise them to a higher level, but to teach them upon how high a platform they already stood, that

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Moses and his covenant were needed and were given. The “types of the covenant” explain and apply the hopes and privileges which lay hidden in the words, “In Isaac shall thy seed be *called*.”

Looking at the history of the chosen people we cannot but be struck with the way in which they seem almost to repeat over again the history of mankind from the first, as well as to foreshadow our own. Sprung from a new and selected stock in the miraculous humanity of Isaac, it would almost seem as if a new race were set upon the earth; a new race under new auspices, auspices happier and more favoured than those of the old race, whose sad history was but one of declension and deterioration. It was so in part. Yet in part only. They were in a measure a new race. Their history was to be one which should, by continual Divine interpositions, become one of continual advance, instead of progressive deterioration. But it is this in spite of continual declensions and falls, in which we see how the blood of the old Adam is still flowing through their tainted veins. The law of

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he new covenant through Isaac is on the whole stronger than the power of the evil that is in them. In spite of their repeated backslidings the Jews do *on the whole* go on continually improving. But we see that it is because their covenanted God is continually checking His covenanted people in their backslidings and declensions. It is the struggle between nature and grace acted out beforehand in the typical race of the Jews. The grace of God's covenant, slowly, gradually, but surely overcomes the defect of nature. The history of the Jews is the exact shadow and representative of the spiritual reconstruction of humanity through the covenant of Christ's death.

So the history of the old Adam and of his natural progeny strives to renew itself in the posterity of Isaac, but God prevents. They go down into Egypt in the very next generation. There they all but forget their birthright. By Divine providence they are prevented from mingling the purer blood of their Abrahamic descent with that of the Egyptian world. Yet they all but forget that it is their *duty* to depart out of Egypt

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when the time ordained of God is come. God uses the sharp sting of Egyptian tyranny to rouse them, and even then it taxes all the patience and the powers of a divinely gifted Moses to prevent their return to the slavish comforts of Egypt, which represent the grovelling ease of the life of sin.

In spite of the Abrahamic covenant and all its hopes, "Sin reigned from Adam to Moses." The Jews had all but forgotten their birthright. It is *necessary* that God should remind them yet further.

Thus God's purpose in the mission of Moses was to remind, to interpret, and to enforce. He opens a new chapter in His dealings with the children of the covenant;—a new *chapter*, we say, for it is by no means a new *covenant*. The covenant of Moses is the old covenant by sacrifice still. It is the old covenant with Abraham renewed before the people's eyes and understandings, and intertwined with their daily life. Its meanings are illustrated one by one in long detail in visible institutions which should maintain their ground through the changing centuries, *always* eloquent for

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God and for the covenant. Its bearings on their national life and conscience are separately interpreted and attested by suggestive ceremonies constantly repeated, interwoven with their national existence, recurring with the recurring seasons, so that the flowing year itself should speak of the relation between the God of Abraham and the seed of Isaac. The covenanted people must never more sink into the forgetfulness of Egypt. Such we conceive to have been the *first* great office of "the Law." It was the expansion and the defensive outwork of the Abrahamic covenant. And this explains why the Mosaic institutions are so surprisingly various and multiplied in detail, and yet make up but one perpetual round and repetition of the one thing—sacrifice.

The *whole* renewed and new-created spiritual life of man derives both its existence and its sustenance from the one Sacrifice. Therefore sacrifice must be remembered and commemorated at *every* pause and resting-place for thought. This is the Divine *rationale* of the unity in variety of the typical system of Moses. The old single simple act of sa-

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sacrifice is developed into a marvellous all-embracing circuit of sacrificial celebrations, each taking up some particular application of the central verity which bears on some particular juncture of individual, or family, or national life.

The one Divine act meets you at every turn. The prism is many-sided, but the light is one.

We have explained the office of the Mosaic covenant as it concerned *the Jews*. We must now proceed to its typical lessons for us as *Christians*.

Among the crowd of these Mosaic teachings two types of peculiar eminence tower above their fellows.

These are (1.) the type of the scape-goat and (2.) the type of the paschal lamb.

(1.) The type of the paschal lamb sets forth two truths mainly. First, it re-affirms that sacrifice is the basis of all covenant or intercourse between God and man. Secondly, it declares that none can share in the blessings of this covenant but those whose life is nurtured and sustained by the Sacrifice Himself. The Passover was a feast *upon* a sacrifice.

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) But the covenanted people themselves are continually *breaking* the covenant. Every act of sin is a breach of it. How are actual breaches to be repaired? It is the type of the scape-goat and the ceremonial of the great day of expiation which answer this question.

The type of the scape-goat proclaims that the true value of *the same sacrifice*, not only is received into covenant, but that all actual sins, if confessed and repented, are continually removed—"taken out of the way"—by the continual, abiding operation of the power of the same Sacrifice which at restored man to communion with God. "taken out of the way :"—the scape-goat "for complete removal." We are not undful of the questions which have been respecting the meaning and intention of this singular institution. But, so we are in any way capable of forming

or an explanation of the very minute directions with regard to the *two* kids of the goats which the day of expiation were to be brought for a offering, see Note at the end of the Tract on the *Expiation*."

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any opinion at all, it does seem to us that the discussions it has raised have only made it clearer, that "for complete removal" is the true rendering of the final words in Leviticus xvi. 8. The type of the scapegoat becomes complete when the symbolic animal has reached "the land not inhabited," i.e. when it has carried the symbolical load of the people's actual sins away into a region where there was none to take cognizance of them. In effect, then, it sets forth that, under the covenant of redemption and by the power of sacrifice, the actual sins of men, confessed and repented, are not allowed to stand between themselves and their God, any more than if they had not been:—they are removed completely, set aside out of the way. The sacrifice "for complete removal" bears them altogether away. Such in few words is what we conceive to be the position, in the general scheme, of the meaning of this very peculiar typical institution. It is easy to see that it meets a peculiar want. What was it in the first instance which stood between man and

<sup>b</sup> Levit. xvi. 22.

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God, and rendered redemption and covenant and sacrifice necessary at all? Was it not sin? And now that a special race of men, the offspring of one peculiarly ordained for this end, has risen into existence as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, a holy nation, to shew forth the praises of Him who called them," does not even the covenant itself seem a failure? Even the covenanted people goes on sinning. Even the covenanted people *renews* the breach which covenant was designed to heal. Is not covenant itself, therefore, a nugatory, fruitless thing, broken, deprived of all validity by each man's individual sins, by the elect nation's national offences?

So might men argue; either with reference to the typical covenant of the Jews, or as to its spiritual counterpart in the revelation of Jesus Christ. But the type of the scape-goat answers them. It is the old question of "sin after baptism" in the Christian Church answered beforehand in the typical system of the Mosaic institutions. So full and so precise is the representative

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.

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outline of Christian truth given under the elder covenant. We are studying Mosaic types, and yet our thoughts revert involuntarily to the terms of our own Article II., "Of the Word or Son of God," whom we confess "to be a Sacrifice, not only for *original* guilt, but also for *actual* sins of men." The sacrifice of Isaac was the type of Christ's sacrifice as the one fountain of all hope of every kind. The paschal lamb and the scape-goat each take one of the two great divisions of its atoning efficacy which our "Article" points out. The paschal lamb represents our Lord as the Sacrifice whereby the covenant is sealed, and the old barrier of original sin broken down and done away. The scape-goat represents His sacrifice as continually availing to remove the new barriers which our own misdeeds and frailty are perpetually building up again in spite of our redeemed condition. Covenanted as we are we still seem bent on ruining ourselves afresh, and falling away from God *again* as Adam did at first. But the blood of the sacrifice is with us *ever*, the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin.

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There have been writers who have spoken of the day of expiation as being the annual renewal of the covenant between God and His people. We distinctly dissent from this view. We consider that it involves a considerable confusion of ideas. It was *not* the renewal of the covenant; but it *was* the restoration of sinners to their place within the covenant. It was the recurring witness to the fact that, upon repentance and confession, the same one sacrifice on which the covenant was based should remove the guilt of sins which, *if unatoned*, would render the covenant of none effect. In one word, it was the annual removal of disqualification for remaining within the covenant. Indeed, the very ceremonies and observances of the day of expiation would be inconsistent with the notion of its being a *renewal* of the covenant. The whole series of observances on the day of expiation has reference to *our* sins. It is meant to teach that although the sacrifice of Christ, alone and by itself, was sufficient ground for God's receiving us into covenant at the first; yet that for *our own* sins we must repent and make con-

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fession, or else the sacrifice of Christ will not avail us. The two must be *combined*. It is the complete answer to the enquiry how we are to get rid of the burden of our own actual offences. It tells us that repentance *alone* is unavailing; and this is why the day of expiation is marked by such an accumulation of sacrifices. But it tells us that sacrifice *alone*, without our repentance, could not remove *our* sins; and this is why we find such a peculiar earnestness of confession, and the laying of the burden of sin upon a specially added victim to bear them away.

The lesson of the day of expiation then is this, that the blood of the covenant, *accompanied* by man's repentance and confession, avails *not only* to place him in covenant with God, but also to the forgiveness of subsequent sin.

This is a very different thing from being merely a renewal of the covenant. Thanksgiving and not confession, joy and not mourning, would be the natural feeling of the devout mind when commemorating God's great covenant of redemption. And this comes out very strongly in the contrast between the day

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of expiation and the paschal solemnity. The paschal celebration *does* express the fact of man's being in covenant with God and *witnesses to the basis of it*. And in this man's part is that of thankful acceptance of God's free gift, and nothing more. So far as "original guilt" is concerned, man can do nothing towards its removal. It is Christ's act, and Christ's alone. Hence the paschal solemnity was in all points essentially eucharistic, as contrasted with the penitential character of everything connected with the scape-goat. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." It was an occasion of unmixed joy at God's great work of man's deliverance. If the thought of man's unworthiness entered at all, it was not by way of dashing the joy, but of heightening the exultation. The great object in view was the perfectness of God's redemption and the completeness with which the original barrier of sin was broken down. But in the sad and mournful ritual of the day of expiation we behold *not* the commemoration of our deliverance from an alien dominion into which we were born without

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fault of our own, but from the results of our own *individual* offences against our covenanted God. We rejoice doubtless that the same sacrifice which delivered us out of the state of bondage will, on our repentance, avail also to the removal of our several offences. But we must mingle our own tears with the blood of the sacrifice. Not a feast now, but a fast, and that a bitter one. It is a day of humiliation that we have been so unworthy of the covenant, that we have sinned against grace and knowledge, and every one who neglects "to afflict his soul" on that day "shall be cut off from among his people." And so, finally, we may say that while in the Passover we behold the victorious Christ rescuing mankind from the evil case in which the Fall has placed them, in the Scape-goat we behold Him in the further aspect of one whom we must look upon with pangs of self-accusing shame, and say, "He was wounded for *our* transgressions: He was bruised for *our* iniquities. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

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### THE TYPE OF THE PASCHAL LAMB.

IT is now Thursday in the Holy Week. It is the day before the great consummation towards which all the types and typical systems which we have been considering have been converging throughout the centuries. It is the evening of the Last Supper, of the agony, of the arrest. But that which in the present Tract it is our special business to notice is, that it is the evening of the last typical Passover which ever should be celebrated. It is the evening of our Lord's last Passover.

Observe then that this is a Passover which stands by itself. As the first Passover of all had circumstances which distinguished it from all following Passovers, so that in the ordinary language of divines it goes by the

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special name of *Pascha Aegyptiacum*, ‘the Passover in Egypt;’ so in like manner this concluding member of the long series of *typical* Passovers has its points of distinctive peculiarity:—it may claim a special title, we may fitly term it the *Pascha Dominicum*, ‘Christ’s own Passover.’

The date of its celebration alone would challenge our attention, and cause us to expect some unusual meaning in this final Passover. The day following was the ordinary occasion for the Jewish Passover. Christ Himself was to suffer on *that* day, as the antitype of the typical sacrifice. Every leading feature in the Jewish Passover was strictly predictive. Even the very day and hour of the yearly paschal sacrifice were prophetic intimations of the destined moment of the final consummation. Christ is “the very Paschal Lamb.” By to-morrow the day and hour “fore-ordained from the foundation of the world” will be fully come. Type must then be swallowed up in antitype, representation in reality, prediction in fulfilment. Christ Himself must be uplifted on the cross of Calvary at the paschal

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hour, Himself to *be* and not to *keep* the Passover.

Yet we read that He earnestly desired to eat this last Passover with His disciples before He suffered; and further, we read that He did so, with added circumstances of the uttermost solemnity. Of course it follows that if He is to hang upon the cross at the foretold hour of the purposed day, and *yet* would celebrate one more typical Passover with His disciples, He must keep it on a day and at an hour of His own. We observe then that He did so. The *last* Passover, Christ's own peculiar Passover, *was* a day before the time. This fact alone would serve to shew that there was something out of the common course in this last paschal feast,—last of the *typical* paschal festivals.

But why? why, when the type was now all but merging into the reality,—why, when the *actual* paschal sacrifice is so near at hand,—why should He, the true “Lamb,” desire so earnestly to repeat an observance which did but *represent* what He Himself was about to fulfil upon the morrow? It would have been but natural to think that

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there was the less need to repeat the type once more.

*Full* reasons for His acts we cannot think that it is ours to offer. The end of all is not yet. In the acts of Christ there is, we may be sure, a divine fruitfulness of meaning which shall be expanding for ever before our minds all down the measureless eternity of our redeemed existence. We *cannot* answer fully. Yet there must have been *great* cause. There is a burden upon the mind of Christ — the burden of a *great* anxiety. He *would* not omit the repetition of this type once more: no, even though it be repeated out of course and under the very shadow of His own oblation.

If we cannot give a full reason for all, let us at least try and learn a little from this “last Passover of Christ.”

Let us observe, then, once more, by way of commencement, that this evening’s solemnity was a celebration of the *Passover*. The Evangelists all treat it as such. Our tendency is to overlook this in our recollection of the Institution of the Holy Communion, which accompanied or followed it; whereas

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our Lord's expressed anxiety was an anxiety "to eat this *Passover*." He says nothing as yet of any future institution to grow out of this final celebration, nothing of any further teachings to arise from it. Whatever may be stirring in the mind of Christ, all is regarded by Him as *contained within* the paschal solemnity itself. Whatever our Lord said or did on this last Passover we are bound to accept as belonging to the Passover, as naturally arising out of it, and therefore *not* as *adding* to it, but simply as *interpreting* it.

The last Passover of Christ, then, was Christ's own interpretation of all previous Passovers. Whatever else it was, it was this also. He on the morrow will fulfil the paschal *sacrifice*; He overnight will interpret the paschal *festival*. Hence His earnestness, His anxiety, His expressed desire. "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He would not leave His own greatest type without the new light shed upon it by one peculiar celebration of His own. There may be deeper meanings still, but this we think is clear. And this being so, let us pause

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to notice what a halo of divine interest is shed upon our subject of the paschal type, which thus could move the mind of Christ now in the supreme hour of His mysterious course,—the agony at hand, the shadow of the Cross already upon His soul. No other type receives this honour at His hands: it stands alone. For observe that it was the *typical* Passover, the Passover yet in its *typical* aspect, that Christ was so anxious to celebrate. Recur for one moment to Christ's words just cited above:—"Before I suffer." He is anxious to celebrate it with His disciples while yet the type was unfulfilled,—to celebrate it while it yet remained a type,—and *with His Apostles*. His words are, "to eat this Passover *with you*:" that they, and we through them, might know how great a depth of undiscovered meanings had lain hidden beneath the old Mosaic institution now to pass away. After this night, a Passover, in the old typical sense, He could never more partake or celebrate. It was a last opportunity for Him and for them alike. He interpreted His chosen type before He suffered.

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One more remark is suggested by our Lord's special celebration of this Passover. We have stated, we believe rightly, that in the observances and the teachings of this night our Lord was supplying the true key to the meaning of the paschal feast upon the paschal lamb. It is very noticeable that He chose to do this by way of a special celebration of the feast. Of course it might have been done, humanly speaking, by a discourse or sermon, setting forth in order the meaning of this and that particular symbol, and interpreting point by point the whole solemnity.

Such was *not* Christ's course. There may have been many reasons against it. One thing clearly results from the course which He *did* adopt. We see the honour which Christ paid to the types which spoke of Him. He would not merely *explain* them: He would *celebrate* them in His own divine manner, and so explain them *through His celebration*. The Mosaic types were shadows only, it is true, but they were shadows of God's own choosing and appointing, shadows sacred and sacramental, and He who came

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“made under the law” deals reverently with every ordinance of God, and hallows even while He takes away.

There was a depth of meaning in the ancient Passover beyond the thought of ancient worshippers; a light for Christians, too, shining from out the shadows of the elder covenant, a light upon the person and the office of the Redeemer, which none but He who gave it could unveil. Yet it was *in* the Passover, even as sweet music slumbers in the instrument, awaiting only the master’s touch to call it from the silent chords. So He would not only *say* (what perhaps no human words *could* say) all that the Passover conveyed, and meant, and symbolized. Himself, the mighty master, touched the hallowed strings, and in His last celebration it gave forth the music of His truth.

So then we have a Divine guidance in our meditations on the paschal lamb. We are not left without a clue. Christ Himself leads us into the inner shrine of that peculiar type which sets forth the deepest and most intimate of the relations which sub-

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between the Redeemer and the remed.

We can but touch upon the subject, select-salient points only, but here we are not to ourselves to form our own unaided gment as to what are the true salient its in the case before us. Here Christ ls the way. We need only follow, and erve the special aspect in which He reded the type in His final celebration.

The paschal lamb was a type of Christ in ouble sense. He is desirous of unfold- both its meanings, but most especially t one, in which at that hour it most need- a divine interpreter. The paschal lamb s a type of the offering of Christ, but it s also more. Isaac had been a type of this. also had been the patriarchal offerings. each in its own way, were for the most t all the Mosaic sacrifices.

But the *paschal* solemnities went far be- id the simple act of sacrifice. In the chal solemnities the actual offering of the b was the foundation and basis of an ex- ded sequel ; a portion, a distinct and sepa- e portion, of the whole. It was a portion

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also which seems to have been carefully and even jealously marked off and separated from the superstructure which it bore. Thus, for example:—the actual offering of the paschal lamb is allotted to the *fourteenth* of Nisan. It must be completed ere the day closes. “Ye shall keep it [the lamb] up until the *fourteenth* day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening”—of course of the *fourteenth* day which has just been mentioned. Then, with the following day\*, and not before, commence the additional observances of the Mosaic institution, when “*they ate the Passover.*” A new day must open, and *then* the sacrifice becomes the *food* of the covenanted people whom the paschal sacrifice has rescued. Such was the uniform rule observed in all Jewish Passovers in

\* Perhaps some of our readers may not have observed that the lamb is to be killed “in the evening” of the fourteenth, (Exodus xii. 6,) and then eaten in the following “night.” (Exodus xii. 8.) The Jewish day closed with sunset, so that the “night” which followed the “evening” of the *fourteenth* was part of the *fifteenth* of Nisan.

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lter times. The paschal *sacrifice* is separated even in *date* from the paschal *festival*, and yet we must observe that the two together do but make up one Passover solemnity. The institution is one, but its constituents are twain; and yet the paschal lamb is the material of both. Now we conceive that *one* special office of this "last Passover of Christ," this *Pascha Dominum*, as we have ventured to designate it, was to bring out into their spiritual and eternal significance the special meaning of his second portion of the paschal institution. The paschal lamb was first sacrificed, then eaten. Perhaps this requires a word of farther explanation. In almost every case *some* portion of the Mosaic offerings was eaten by the worshippers and priests, and therefore it may be objected that we are making too much of this point in the Passover. We do not think so. In the case of other offerings it was a *portion* only which was returned to the priests and offerers for food. With the paschal lamb it was otherwise. It was given *entirely* to be the material of the feast. It was even to be

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*roasted whole.* All of it was for the covenanted worshippers after it had typified the sacrifice of Christ. There is even a kind of lavish abundance (if such a phrase be permitted us) of emphasis laid upon this particular in the ceremonies which are prescribed. The very manner of sacrificing it is regulated with this view:—not a bone of it is to be broken. It is all for the worshippers, and they are to consume it all:—none of it is to remain until the morning. So there is more than sacrifice brought before us here. There is that which sacrifice subserves. There is sacrifice as the means of restored communion. There is communion as the means of reaching to and sharing in the benefits for which the sacrifice of Christ was given. There is the identity of Person between Him who redeems by sacrifice, and Him who is our life by way of spiritual communion. Yet more, there is the added truth that in His covenant of redemption God gives His best, and gives it wholly. He keeps back nothing, and it is all for us. As the paschal lamb was offered so that no portion was kept back for priest

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or altar, or for any representative of God, but all when offered went to feed the worshippers in paschal festival, so with the very paschal lamb: God keeps back nothing. All is for us men and our salvation. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, and then He is wholly given to us. Our redeemed humanity partakes of the whole incarnate nature of the Incarnate Son: not in a figure, but in some true, though as yet mysterious manner, we are partakers of the Divine nature, being made one with Him in spiritual communion.

Read the history and the discourses of Christ's own Passover with these ideas in mind, and the whole narrative will have a meaning and a power which it never had before. It is the interpretation of the central act of the elder covenant, and out of it arises the central act, the new passover of the Christian Church. It is the death and the rising again of the ancient solemnity. The typical Passover passes away; the Christian Eucharist takes up the strain. The Jewish rite becomes the Christian Sacrament, and the forms of the Sacrament still

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give forth the same lessons which the forms of the elder rite had taught.

The sacrifice was all of it for the benefit of those who were taught to offer it. So with us. The Body and the Blood are "given" for us. "Take this and divide it among yourselves," He says of "the Blood which is the life." He tastes it not, He keeps back nothing. It would seem they marvelled, since He has to add some explanation for this last command. Yet so it is. But above all we would recur again to the great fact that this last Passover shews so clearly that the doctrine of "communion" *was* a main constituent in the teachings of the paschal festival. We have seen in former Tracts how sacrifice and covenant go together; how in God's successive dealings with man it is shewn that all the continued life of humanity exists only by virtue of a redemption through a covenant based on sacrifice. All human life is *redeemed* life. Traced upwards to its final source, we see this redeemed life issuing from the throne of God, from the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Which is the Son of God.

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The *paschal* lamb sets forth that as all redeemed existence has its source in this sacrifice, so also all redeemed life depends upon it still. We have no existence apart from Him. The discourses which accompany this “Passover of Christ” bring this out strongly. The Sacrifice, the Divine material of the heavenly Sacrifice, Christ the celestial “Lamb,” *is* our life. The Blood *is* the life. Whatsoever of Divine and supernatural vitality is shadowed forth by “the Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you,” *that* must be ever circulating through the veins of our redeemed existence. For the Church and for the individual it is the same. Sacrifice *and* communion, or the sacrifice is of no avail. The sacrifice *and* the feast made up but one passover solemnity; separate either from other and it became no passover at all, and without the passover the Mosaic institutions had neither centre nor coherence, the covenanted people of God had no symbol or token of their Divine inheritance.

Thus, then, the paschal solemnities interpreted by Christ’s last typical Passover became a comprehensive Gospel in symbol.

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The final “Passover of Christ” brings the hidden lights to view. The Passover and the Eucharist join hands under the shadow of the Cross, and both bear witness to Him who is the subject of their conjoint adoration.

So standing they proclaim their natural relationship, first to Him, next to one another through Him. The elder illustrate the younger, and the new explains the old.

The one resigns her ancient commission to Him who gave it, but ere she departs she stays to see Him hand it on in fairer letter and in brighter colours to her new-found sister, the Eucharistic sacrament of the Christian Church.

The other acknowledges that half her meanings must be lost to those who do not see her lineaments foreshadowed in the paschal festival of the Jewish covenant.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.”

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## GOOD FRIDAY.

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### THE GREAT CONSUMMATION.

IT cannot fail to be observed, by those who watch for such things, how *quiet* is the Church's way of going about the salvation of her children. To give an instance of what I mean, observe the mode of preparation for receiving the Holy Communion prescribed in the Catechism. Considering the awful nature of the subject, and the deep feelings belonging to it, remembering that the Holy Eucharist was called of old "the tremendous mysteries," the "awful gifts," and the like, and that it is the highest act of faith;—considering this, might we not have expected, that the directions for duly receiving would have said something of the intense, high-wrought feeling, which seems to become the approach to such a mystery?

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But what do we find prescribed instead of this? “To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life ; to have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death ; and to be in charity with all men.” That is, the Church’s requirements at the hands of her children are,—not rapturous contemplation, not eager insatiable longings,—but a sober act of self-scrutiny as to the reality of their repentance and future purposes, (a thing to be judged of by what they observe as to their ordinary habits and actions) ; a spirit of trust in, and of thankfulness for, Christ’s death ; and a spirit of charity. So again in preparing her children for their last awful hour. No raptures are prescribed ; no strong emotions are sought to be roused. Her one care, as evinced in the structure of her Offices for the Visitation and Communion of the Sick, is, to ascertain the existence, in her dying child, of a right faith, and to impart, if need be, due cleansing in order to saving Communion with God through Christ. The Creed, and the Eucharist, with

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preparation for it, are the simple instruments she works with. The one professed, the other received, there follows no more but a short Psalm of thanksgiving for the same ; the words of blessing, and the closing dismissal in peace.

Something of the same kind may be observed in the Church's services for Good Friday, and the object of this Tract will be, to examine what is her mind, as implied in those services, as to the frame in which this most solemn Day should be passed ; and to deduce some practical conclusions from it.

We may observe, then, that in the services proper to the day there is no appearance of any special attempt to work up the feelings to an intense and passionate contemplation of the awful spectacle of Christ Crucified. Not that the spectacle itself is not set before us ; for it is so, very distinctly, in Psalm and in Prophecy ; in Type and in Reality, in Collect, and Epistle, and Gospel : but it is rather in the way of quiet statement, than of pathetic or impassioned appeal. On comparing the selections of Scripture for the day, with that for the two

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preceding days, we find that the change is rather from the more to the less stirring. The high prophetic style of Hosea, the pathetic remonstrances of Jeremiah, and the passionate pleadings of Daniel before his God are exchanged for the quieter tone of the simple though deep and touching narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac, and the almost historic fidelity of Isaiah's portraiture of the Man of Sorrows. For the second Morning Lesson, again, and for the Gospel, St. John's narrative, in some respects the plainest, and the most closely confined to simple fact of any, is appointed. Not only is the account thus given us on this day much shorter, and therefore containing fewer particulars, than those of the preceding days; but many of the most profoundly moving incidents are dropped out from it. The railing of the people, and of one of the thieves, related by the more circumstantial St. Luke in the Gospels of Wednesday and Thursday; the weeping and lamentations of the faithful women, and the compassionate reply of Christ,—and again, how “all the people *that came together to that sight, behold.* .  
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ing the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned,"—circumstances preserved, as his manner is, by the same pathetic Evangelist;—these find no place in the briefer narrative with which the Church presents us to-day from the pen of St. John. St. Luke, again, has recorded three several sayings, each one of infinite pitifulness, uttered by our Lord on the Cross: viz. the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;"—the promise, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;"—and the commendation, "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit:"—while St. Mark, recording the final cry, though not the words of it, has given also that other lamentable cry at the ninth hour, which flashes such an awful light through the whole contexture of the 22nd Psalm, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Whereas St. John, omitting these more thrilling accompaniments of the Divine Passion, has preserved no more than the simple exclamations, "I thirst;" and again, on the receiving of the vinegar, "It is finished."

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And to these last words I would draw especial attention, not so much with any design of opening up the infinite, unfathomable meaning which they must have had in His lips, who from all eternity had intended, planned, and carried on the vast work of redemption; as because they furnish a fitting type of the comparatively quiet and unimpassioned character which the Church would seem designedly to have impressed on the services for Good Friday.

It would then, I conceive, be a mistake to consider this day as intended, in the Church's view of it, as an occasion for intense devotional rapture or absorption, which is probably the view that many persons take of it, and attempt to realize. And is not the Church's view the right one? Let us consider.

And observe, first, that according to the profound observation of a Father, the Passion is not, in itself, a mournful event. "We do not fast," says St. Chrysostom, "for the Passion or the Cross, but for our sins:—the Passion is not the occasion of fasting or mourning, but of joy and exultation.

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We mourn not for that,—God forbid,—but for our sins.” This is no unimportant distinction. For consider how the Passion must have looked in the sight of the Blessed Angels. The healthful, life-giving, triumphant Passion,—how could it be mournful? That which was to give life to a dead world, to replenish the diminished ranks of the Angels, to fill up the number of the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, to vanquish Death and Hell,—how could it but be most joyful? Do we not ourselves bear witness to this, in that we celebrate with joy and thankfulness our commemorative sacrifice, representative of that event. When it can be shewn that Holy Baptism, the receiving into the kingdom of heaven a new denizen and heir of immortality—that this is a penitential and mournful solemnity;—say rather, when it can be shewn that to be admitted into heaven itself is a cause for mourning,—then also may it be proved that the memorial of Christ’s Passion can, under any conceivable circumstances, with whatever of penitential recollection accompanied, be other than a joyful feast. For this Sacrament does but preserve the

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life immortal which the other gives: it is the “medicine of immortality,” “life eternal,” “the partaking of the resurrection.”

The Church then, taking this more purified and enlightened view of the Passion, how does she guide her children with respect to it? Has it for her no mournful aspect, no penitential side? Doubtless it has, but on the right grounds; namely of our sinfulness as the cause of the Passion. To this it is that her weekly Friday and her annual Forty days are directed. In the words of a living Divine, “As the Lord’s Day is the weekly Festival of our Saviour’s Resurrection, a weekly memorial of our rising again in Him and through Him, to a new and real life; so is the Friday’s Fast a weekly memorial of the death to sin, which all Christians in their Saviour died,” and an expression of grief for the sins by which they crucified Him. And the forty days of Lent are designed for the same purpose; to give space for that mourning and lamentation for sin and its consequences which were a greater burden than a single day could bear. This, and the working in ourselves

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a conformity to the sufferings of Christ; the becoming truly crucified with Him; is the proper end of all these days of humiliation. As then the time comes on when this great event of Christ's Passion is commemorated as complete, what will be the frame in which it will, by the nature of the case, find us? Surely, if we have been really and truly bedewing our sins for so long a time past with the tears of repentance, and the blood of Christ, and bringing ourselves into a real conformity to the Passion of Christ, we shall find ourselves in the condition not of those who awake for the first time to the contemplation of a novel sight of fearfulness and terror; nor yet of those who view it the more fearfully, and shrink from it the more tremblingly, and redouble their cries and agonies of supplication, the nearer it actually approaches them: but rather of those who, through the chastening process of repentance, have been brought to a deeply penitent state indeed, but of less passion, and of calmer though more lowly prostrations,—of those who, feeling themselves by God's grace more crucified with

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Christ than heretofore, begin to taste somewhat the sweetness of that healthful Passion which they are made partakers of; to whom therefore the Cross, like the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses, is a sign and means of refreshment, rather than an object of terror and distress. In one who has thus been living many days in the now familiar presence of the Cross,—thus walking step by step, as far as he may, in the blood-besprinkled footsteps that lead to Calvary,—there will awake, as this most high day comes on, somewhat of that deep, thankful, hopeful sense of completed work, and consummated redemption, which spoke in the last words of the Redeemer Himself, “It is finished.” “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost.” “It is finished.” If our Lent has indeed been kept aright, if our grief has been sincere, and our crucifixion real,—real in its bitterness, and self-abnegation, and obedience,—then, so far forth as this has been the case, so far for us, “It is finished.” For then “we are ready to be offered;” and

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were the very “time of our departure at hand,” so “to depart and to be with Christ were far better.” We can scarce expect to be much better prepared for death than such a preparation as this would find us, “It is finished.” The undoing of Satan’s work is accomplished in us, we are weaned from the world, “we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.”—“It is finished.” Whatever of holy purpose, or sustained endeavour, has accompanied us through the solemn season just closing; if there be any one lust or passion we have sought, and not in vain, to mortify and kill; if we have been learning to love any one better, concerning whom our conscience told us we had hitherto been “verily guilty;”—if we have manfully closed with any duty heretofore distasteful to us;—if we have learnt to bear disappointment, or to do without praise, or to be patient under failure or reproof, or to bend our own will to another’s, or to God’s; —in a word, if we have taken up any cross in the might and for the love of Him, who this day died for us on the Tree;—all *that* “is finished” now, as to the process of it,—as

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to the tediousness, and the struggle, and the pain ;—the bitterness of that death is past.

What then is left for this solemn day to do for us ? I answer first as regards our Repentance, to deepen it, and to fix it ; to make that which we trust has been growing of late into something like a habit, to make this inseparably for ever a part of ourselves. Christ is this day so vividly set forth crucified among us, that the sins, by which we crucified Him, cannot but appear in the most deadly light ; “ the things which have been done of us in secret ” are this day so openly “ reproved,” that now if ever we must surely bewail and loathe them.

And again as to the new self which we have been seeking to form and to grow into ; the vices we have been seeking to mortify and kill, and the graces we have desired to implant in their place ;—all this work and endeavour, all this dying to sin, is, this day as it were, taken up into the dying of Christ. Hitherto we have been crucifying ourselves, though in the strength of Christ ;—this day we are crucified in Christ and with Christ. We have been, according to our measure,

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“bearing about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus<sup>a</sup>,” in the way of anticipation: this day “we are delivered unto *death* for Jesus’ sake<sup>b</sup>,” or through Jesus; now indeed “death worketh in us<sup>c</sup>,” or “is wrought in us;” even the strong dying of Him who alone by His Life and by His Death “utterly abolished the whole body of sin.” And it can scarcely be, but that our being brought into the immediate presence of so perfect an Example, and into memorial and sacramental<sup>d</sup> contact of so mighty an indwelling strength, will greatly enable us to accomplish what hitherto we have found very hard to flesh and blood, and well nigh impossible. The sweetness of some secretly indulged pleasure, or some cherished and

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 10.      <sup>b</sup> Ibid. 11.      <sup>c</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>d</sup> The practice of the Church throughout the world to this day, is for the Communion to be *received* on Good Friday. Though in the Roman and Greek Churches (not in *all* Eastern Churches) there is no consecration, but reception only, the English Church, by not having authorized reservation, by providing Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, clearly declares her mind,—doubtless in full accordance with antiquity,—that there should be consecration also on that day.

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darling revenge, will now seem bitter in comparison of the hallowed joy of obedience, and the bliss of pardoning. It is to this purpose that our Christian poet would turn the spectacle of this day<sup>o</sup>. “Bitter herbs of earth,” indeed, are disappointments, and slights, and vexings of heart; things that go wrong and leave us baffled, hopeless, and spiritless. But look to the Cross; there hangs infinite sense of rejection, of repulse, of scorning; infinite brokenness and spiritlessness of heart;—yet, with it, unwearied patience, inexhaustible love. Christ actually hanging on the Cross (which is the spectacle and the lesson and the sacrament of this day) may have power to teach us, and to enable us to do, what even Christ going step by step to that Cross, (which is the spectacle and the lesson and the sacrament of these Forty Days past, and of all the Fridays of the Church’s year,) has failed, perfectly, to teach us.

This then, I say, is the proper work of this High Day of our Redemption: to complete a work already begun,—to enter upon

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the now realized estate for which a long training has been gone through ; to chasten, and deepen, and fix, by the profound but quiet contemplation of a familiar and now peculiarly present Object, resolves and habitual feelings long since cherished ; to trim off the last remaining adherences of affection to sin, and to unite the complete sacrifice of our body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect and acceptable Offering of Christ.

Observe, then, what the Church's view of this day supposes. It supposes us to have been during these forty days of Lent, steadfastly persevering in a course of duties and habits proper to prepare us for this day. It supposes us to have been directing our thoughts and devotions more especially towards the Cross of Christ : to have been really and honestly mortifying and denying the flesh ; really and unfeignedly fasting ; keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection, by abridging it of its ordinary food, and laying aside its ordinary recreations and enjoyments ; giving up the time so redeemed to increase of prayer, and dedicating the money so saved to alms-

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giving ;—and thus to have been exercising, with a more than ordinary watchfulness, our threefold duties towards our God, our neighbour, and ourselves ; seeking God in Christ, doing good to others, and ruling our spirit. And as to the last-mentioned particular, we are supposed to have been making diligent inquiry and search into our past sins ; to have been much on our knees actually bewailing them, one by one asking God pardon for them ; then, again, to have been pleading before God, in the same way, all the actions of Christ, and His Passion above all, as the ordained Atonement for those sins ;—adding to this, frequent contemplation, in prayer, of the awful day of Judgment, and earnest deprecation of the wrath of that day, from which Christ came to deliver us.

Now I have no doubt that there are at least some of my readers who have been doing no one of these things : who, whether as not having been brought up to it, or through want of stedfast purpose, have lived through Lent as they do at all other times, making no difference whatever from their ordinary habits ; who have not added one

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hour to their devotions, nor directed one thought more than common towards the Cross of Christ; who have not denied themselves any single gratification, or abridged any single meal; much less have they made it a time of searching self-examination, hearty repentance, and solemn bringing of themselves to the awful Bar of the Judgment. And as to turning the Fridays and other Fast-days appointed by the Church to any such purposes as these, it forms no part of their religious habits. Now, do I say to one who is in this case, you cannot observe this day to any purpose? No: God forbid that I should say so. But this I do say,—that you cannot observe it in the Church's way. She supposes you to have been this long time past doing those acts, and acquiring those habits, of which I have spoken; she contemplates *that* as an end and a summing up of the past, which to you is beginning and end and all. She supposes you to have a sacrifice ready to offer, and you are come empty-handed: "Behold the fire and the knife, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" The altar of the

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Cross is ready, but you have nothing to lay upon it—you have brought no darling sin, no cherished passion, to be offered there; and you vainly trust that “the Lord will provide:”—forgetting that, if God so dealt with the faithful Patriarch, it was “because he had obeyed His voice;” because he had trod the appointed way and “had not withheld his son, his only son, from Him.”

Nor, I think, can you honestly say that you derive much comfort from the Services of the day. “Many persons, probably,” says a writer already quoted, “who have endeavoured to realize to themselves the events of this day have been painfully disappointed.” Instead of “touching the heart with comfort” it is to them an oppressive day; its tremendous truths overwhelm rather than console them; it is so unlike all other days, that the mind is confounded by its very greatness. Something of this kind probably takes place in a great many minds on this day; and the reason is, that the solemnity of the day is too insulated; that it is out of keeping with the religious habits of the rest

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of the year. And all this is too much of a piece with the rest of the miserable religion of the day, which crowds the devotion of the week into the Sunday, and makes that a day of humiliation and festival all in one ; forgetful that another day in each week is appointed for one of these purposes<sup>1</sup>. And so on this day, a man may indeed cast himself in a blind agony of remorse and terror at the foot of the Cross ; and God may be pleased through that agony and remorse to work some amendment in him ; but he has neither time nor collectedness of spirit to enter into the depths of Christ's sufferings, nor "to look on Him whom he has pierced" with anything like a conscious sorrow for his innumerable sins. He is like one brought suddenly to the brink of the grave ; all is perplexity and confusion and distress. The Passion of Christ, instead of being to him a light seen afar off, and approached humbly but collectedly and hopefully, and stream-

<sup>1</sup> See the Table of Fasts and Festivals at the beginning of the Prayer-book—"Festivals, all Sundays in the year—Fasts, all Fridays in the year, except Christmas Day."

## **THE GREAT CONSUMMATION.**

ing forth rays of comfort in which he can rejoice, dashes by him like a meteor, beheld with wonder and dismay. The calm unimpassioned Service of the Church appointed for this day, brings no comfort to him, if he thinks at all on the momentous subject of it.

I would ask you then—shall it always be thus with you? Shall another year, another Lent come round, and find you still neglecting the only availing preparation for another Good Friday? I am so persuaded that the neglect of these things lies at the root of the low standard of religion prevailing among us, that I do not hesitate to make it the one great exhortation which I would found upon the awful subject of this day's contemplation, that you would take up, without delay, the diligent observance of the Church's appointed days of preparation, through the year long, and through Lent when it comes round again, as the best means for fitting the soul, by God's grace, rightly to contemplate, and really to be united to, the tremendous Sacrifice of the Son of God.

# acts for the Christian Seasons.

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## EASTER EVE.

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### THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

ERE is something very solemn in the illness and inactivity of this Easter

Those who have tried during the week to follow in thought our Divine er through the terrible scenes of Geth-  
ne and Calvary, standing in imagina-  
at the foot of the Cross, amid the blas-  
ing multitude, and the gathering dark-  
and the shaking rocks, cannot but be  
ble of a holy calm pervading this day.  
tremendous deed to which the whole  
ry of the world was converging is con-  
iated. The mysterious Being who, for  
hs if not years, has filled the minds of  
itizens of Jerusalem, is withdrawn from  
g them. The violence of His foes has  
ed its pleasure. The anxiety of His

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friends has lost its object. He Himself is no longer upon earth. The body has been carried to the rich man's garden. They have wrapt it in the fine linen, and laid it in the new tomb. The soul has departed afar off. In the words of the Creed, it has gone down into hell.

It is upon the truth expressed in these words that we would now dwell. It is most undesirable that we should repeat this Article of the Creed day by day without attaching any distinct meaning to it. Better, perhaps, it may be, to conceive of it erroneously, or at any rate imperfectly, than to mock God and blunt our own moral perceptions by continually uttering a mere form of words with which the mind has nothing to do. We do not pretend that any amount of thought will clear up all the difficulties hanging round this part of Christ's work. Nevertheless, there are certain passages of Scripture which throw some light upon it, sufficient at any rate to prevent the repetition of the Creed from being in regard to one sentence a mere mechanical *act of the lips.*

### THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

We are most of us familiar with the change by which the rest of the Sabbath was transferred in Apostolic times from the seventh day of the week to the first. It is usual to explain this as having been done in honour of the Resurrection of Christ. And no doubt the explanation is so far correct, but it is worth observing also that the Sabbatical rest of the seventh day prolonged through so many ages, had now, considered as a type, done its work. It had found its highest fulfilment in the repose of Christ in death during what we call Easter Eve, and having been so accomplished, it yielded to another commemoration. The cessation of labour, the rigid retirement of the Israelites from all but the most necessary work, the sudden stoppage of the wheels of a nation's life upon the last day of the week, was a dim shadow of that withdrawal of the Lord from the outer world, that rest of His soul after its conflict with evil which began upon the evening of Good Friday and continued through the ensuing day. "That Sabbath day was an high day." So wrote the Evangelist, little penetrating the infinite depth of his

### THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

own words. It was the Sabbath not of man but of God, the deep unbroken rest of the Eternal Son from the labour of redemption, during which the body of flesh which had been worn, and buffeted, and scourged, lay almost for the first time without suffering in Joseph's tomb, and the human soul drank in the light and refreshment of Paradise.

But although we may thus conceive of Christ's human soul as at rest after it left the body, it would seem that we are not to regard it as inactive. There are mysterious hints in Holy Scripture of a work wrought by our Lord whilst He was numbered with the dead. We appear to be taught that although He was at rest from the malice of Satan and the persecutions of wicked men, He was still busied in ministering to the wants of others, finding a work to accomplish in that hidden world into whose depths He had descended. What that work was, it is but reasonable that we should be unable to define accurately. When we are ourselves within the borders of that secret place, acquainted with the laws of being, *the powers, and condition of its inhabit-*

## THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

ants, then, and not until then, ought we to expect to understand thoroughly our Lord's work among them. It may be part of the occupation of the souls of the saints when gathered into that inner chamber, to ponder and to learn the nature of Christ's work in *that* world, as it is our privilege in *this world* to meditate upon His life and actions *here*.

But although we must be content for the full meaning of this article of the Creed to develope itself hereafter, yet God has not left us entirely untaught as to the object of Christ's descent into hell. Let us by the guidance of Scripture travel as far as we may along this mysterious road. We may, perhaps, comprehend all that can be said of this work under two heads, those of *sympathy and instruction*.

I. It may be reasoned that the sympathy of Christ could not have been perfect without a sojourn of His human soul amongst the disembodied souls of men.

It is not uncommon for people to speak of the dead as though they were immediately after death in heaven or hell. Yet nothing

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is more clearly stated in Scripture than that the righteous will not be admitted to the vision of God, nor the wicked cast out of His presence, until the day of judgment. Indeed, if the faithful were to be glorified, and the wicked to be condemned *forthwith*, it is hard to see what real meaning would be left to the words "Day of Judgment," as applied to the last day. Our instinct tells us that judgment precedes in order the idea of sentence and punishment. It follows, then, in full accordance with many intimations of Scripture, that there must be an intermediate state or condition in which the souls of the departed await the judgment. We create for ourselves some of the difficulties which beset this subject, by speaking too much of a *place* of departed souls. "Place" is a word which involves the idea of *matter*, and the soul being immaterial, may perhaps have nothing to do with place when separated from the body. Again, when we speak of a separation of the good and bad at the moment of death, we introduce the idea of *place*, as if there were two worlds wholly distinct into which the souls of the faithful

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and unfaithful respectively go. And thence arises the question whether our Blessed Lord's soul went into both divisions of this hidden abode, or only into the home of the righteous. The question seems to grow immediately out of a too *material* conception of the spiritual world. It is safer and probably more correct to speak of the *condition* of departed souls. The souls of the dead according as they die in the Lord or not, may in their own blessed hope, or their own boding fears, create for themselves a happy or miserable existence, but there may, for aught we know, be no *separation* until the Day of Judgment, when the *soul* being again lodged in the body, the idea of locality properly revives. If it is urged that in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus a great gulf is said to be fixed between the two disembodied spirits, yet, on the other hand, this may only be a figure of speech to denote their widely different estate, certainly they are represented as not so divided as to be unable to hold intercourse with each other.

In this intermediate state of being we are taught that the soul of Christ was found

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when, as it is written, "He gave up the Ghost." Then He who had bowed the heavens to come down to earth, stooped yet another degree in His wondrous self-abasement, and became mingled with those who, having suffered the law of death, are reserved unto God's great day. And it is not difficult to see how it was essential for the completeness of Christ's sympathy that He should tarry for a short space among the dead. It was by identifying Himself with man in every phase of man's existence that He qualified Himself to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Thus by becoming a child he learnt to sympathize with childhood; He vouchsafed to have kindred and friends that He might experience how the ties of kindred and friendship operate upon men. But it is to be remembered that man lives not only upon earth. The soul exists in full consciousness after death, and the soul of Christ underwent the condition of departed souls that He might know the habits of the dead as of those that are here alive. We are apt to speak of death as a momentary stroke, rather than as a state of existence. Death is a con-

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dition of life, having its own laws of being, its own relationships, its own wants; and to know this after-life of the human soul, as He had made Himself, by sharing it, familiar with the life of those in the body, in order that He might be the merciful and compassionate High Priest of the whole Church, did Christ's soul, released from the body, share for awhile that mysterious existence. This is the full meaning of that passage of St. Paul, "For this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord of the dead and the living." He speaks as though it were essential in the nature of things, that He who would be Lord of both, must Himself have experienced the condition of both.

It may be asked how there can be scope for the sympathy of Christ in regard to the saints who are asleep. We have before said that upon this side the grave we know little or nothing of the needs or capacities of the disembodied soul, but inasmuch as sameness of character is not annihilated by the act of dying, inasmuch, that is, as the soul when loosened from the flesh is in perfect

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consciousness, and must be believed to retain all those distinct characteristics which constitute "individuality," one excelling in love, another in meekness, and again, one being more prone to fear and misgivings than another, we may in some measure perceive how Christ may have as varied a work to do in ministering to the departed as towards those who remain on earth, soothing, and strengthening, and consoling them each according to his own special need. Lord of the dead and the living, He has a providence to exercise, modifications of character to satisfy among both. Hence the full force of the promise to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be *with Me* in Paradise." It was not Paradise, but Paradise *with Christ* which was to cheer his spirit in that fierce death-struggle. So St. Paul describes himself as having a desire to depart and to be *with Christ*, as though anticipating, when unclothed of his mortal body, a still closer communion with his God. If then the Redeemer was to be the stay and support of all His servants in their waiting and imperfect state, if during the lengthening years

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between death and judgment He was to be the Shepherd of His faithful, walking with them and keeping them in perfect peace, we may in some faint degree perhaps discern what an essential part of His loving work it was that He should, as it is said, descend into hell, and experience the life of the disembodied spirit, as He had already experienced this earthly life of man.

II. But there are passages in the New Testament which seem to connect the idea of instruction with the design of our Lord's sojourn among the dead. The chief of these passages is that in the First Epistle of St. Peter, which the Church has appointed as the Epistle for Easter Eve, thereby sanctioning its application to this particular period. The passage is as follows : " Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit ; by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah ".

Now surely the obvious meaning of this passage, and the meaning which alone an-

\* 1 Pet. iii. 18—20.

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swers to the weightiness of the words, is this, that the human soul of Christ when at death it was separated from His human flesh, acquired, as it were, a new and wondrous life by the very act of dissolution, and that in the strength of this new life it travelled forth upon an awful mission to the departed, and there preached to the spirits detained in close keeping until the end of all things. It may be asked, ‘Why the souls of the disobedient should be mentioned rather than the souls of the righteous, and why particularly the disobedient of Noah’s day?’ We reply that we must bear in mind the scope of the passage. The object of St. Peter is to prove the impotency of death over the Lord’s Christ; to shew that the quickening of the soul into new life far more than balanced the putting to “death in the flesh.” To demonstrate, then, the marvellous powers of the disembodied soul, he asserts that it preached after death to the imprisoned spirits that had sinned, yea sinned so long ago as in the days before the flood. He fetches up, as it were, the most unlikely hearers, from the most distant epoch, and declares that even

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to sinners of that remote period the soul of the Lord preached. This special generation is mentioned as an extreme instance of the reach of that ineffable preaching. Strange mystery of godliness, thwarting all the designs of the kingdom of darkness! Christ preached upon earth to the disobedient, and the devil would stop that preaching, and therefore he stirred up the malice of the Jews and the jealousy of the Romans, and so brought about the death of the Great Teacher. And lo, death did but gift Him with new powers, and send Him forth whither in the flesh He had never gone, to utter His voice to the spirits in the prison of the underworld. That “putting to death in the flesh” did but bring our Lord as a teacher in communion with those whom, save by dying, He had never addressed.

There is another question which will be asked, ‘What was the use of this preaching? What effect could it have upon those whose probation was over, whether good or bad?’ It might be a sufficient answer that whilst Scripture has distinctly declared that Christ did preach, it has not declared *why*

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He preached. It has unfolded part of a great mystery, it has not unfolded the whole. Surely we may not refuse to accept a fact which God has revealed, because He has not further explained why that fact was permitted. And yet as we gaze into the darkness, the soul of the Redeemer entering through the brazen doors into the world of the departed, and the mighty ones of elder times thronging around, we can imagine what a joy it may have been to them to hear of the redemption which had been completed, when Abraham heard His voice whose day he had desired to see, and David beheld Him whom he had dimly descried afar off, and Simeon learned the finished work of the Child whose mission he had foretold. And if it is still urged that St. Peter speaks of a preaching to those who had died impenitent, it may be answered that he does not speak of it as a preaching of repentance. There is no intimation of a change of condition produced by that preaching, save from a condition of less to one of greater knowledge. And just as this increase of divine knowledge would gladden the souls of the faith-

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ful, so would it tend to deepen the anguish of the rebellious; as they heard of the full manifestation of the love which they had provoked in the days of their flesh, and of the mighty salvation in which they could have no share. The same blessed tidings of His own finished work would have precisely opposite effects upon the two classes of our Lord's hearers. The passage of St. Peter does not therefore at all interfere with the doctrine that there is no repentance in the grave. And this being so we may have less difficulty in giving it a literal interpretation. It may have been for the glory of the Lord Jesus that, as on earth, so beyond earth, not the tender-hearted but the unthankful also should hear of the Divine mercy and of the overthrow of Satan. It may have been reserved as the consummation of His victory, that in the very prison-house of the reprobate it should be known that the last enemy had been destroyed and the world reconciled to God.

We do not hope to have made clear every point of this subject. We have said enough

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to shew that there are great truths expressed under the words “He descend into hell.” Let it not be forgotten that there are truths very full of comfort also. “Y<sup>t</sup> though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for *Th* art with me,”—*Thou* who didst Thyself taste of death, and art able therefore to comfort and to sympathise with us in the hour of dying, and in the dark vale which, beginning with the close of this life, opens out at a further end upon the Judgment Throne.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## EASTER SUNDAY.

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### THE EXODUS.

IT is one of the characteristic features of Holy Scripture, that its narratives, as well as its language, have such extraordinary force, that they have penetrated the minds and grafted themselves into the common speech of men wherever they are familiarly known. The patience of Job, the wisdom of Solomon, the land flowing with milk and honey, the view from Pisgah of the Land of Promise, the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal, the vineyard of Naboth, and a thousand other incidents and descriptions, are instances of what I mean. Perhaps, however, no one incident recorded in the Bible supplies a better example than that which is the subject of our present meditations. We will try and get a clear idea of the historical event which is designated by this word Exodus. We all know

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that there exists in the world at the present time a particular race of men who are called Jews, and whose mother-tongue is the Hebrew. This race of men have one strange peculiarity, viz., that they have no country, no native land, but are scattered through all countries, and are strangers in them all. We find them in large numbers in our own capital and other large cities; in much larger numbers in Poland and Germany; in France, in Italy, in Africa, in Arabia, in India, in China, in a word, everywhere. We meet with them, too, very frequently in the pages of history, and generally as objects of oppression, ill-usage, and scorn. If we track them back to the home of their fathers, we at last come to Palestine, a narrow strip of country on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, with Jerusalem for its capital. Here we find that they were once a powerful and a very remarkable nation. We hear a great deal about them from Roman and other historians and poets who wrote some eighteen centuries ago; and we find that they were then utterly unlike all other nations of the earth in their religion,

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their laws, their institutions, and their national character. Especially, be it observed, they were different from the nations immediately around them. They were different from the Phœnicians who dwelt on the sea-coast to the west of them ; different from the Syrians and Chaldeans who dwelt to the east and north of them ; and different from the Arabs of the desert who dwelt to the east and to the south of them. However, there had they dwelt some thirteen or fourteen centuries, with certain strange vicissitudes of fortune ; sometimes independent and ruling over their neighbours, sometimes tributary to them, sometimes dragged captives to foreign lands ; but always exhibiting the same unbending peculiarities of religion and manner. One of these peculiarities is worthy of especial mention. The other races of mankind, whether the highly civilized Egyptians, Phœnicians, Greeks and Romans, or the more savage and barbarous races, were given up to idolatry. The gods of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Assyria, Babylon, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and so on, were innumerable ; and their temples, and images, and priests

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filled those several lands. The worship of the Jews was also conspicuous by the splendour of its temple and the richness of its ceremonial. But they had no images, and worshipped one only God, the Creator of the universe !

Whoever will transplant himself in thought to those times, and realize the condition of this race of Jews by the side of that heathen world ; on the one hand the splendid idolatries of Egypt permeating their social and political action, the poetical, graceful, and imaginative mythology of Greece, the political heathenism of Rome, the sensual rites of Syria and Phœnicia, and on the other the worship of Jehovah according to the Law and the Prophets of the Hebrew nation, will readily see how truly wonderful a phenomenon in the history of mankind the monotheistic creed of the Jews through so many centuries must needs be considered.

But having thus tracked back the Jews to their home in Palestine, and seen them as they were to be seen by their neighbours and contemporaries any time between the age of Cæsar, or Pompey, or the Emperor

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pasian, and the age of Solomon or Joshua, enquiry now to be set on foot is, where these Jews come from, and how came to be settled in Palestine, and to be so like other people? And singularly enough did here we light upon another startlingliarity of this extraordinary people—own national books and records give clear, distinct, and thoroughly satisfactory answer to these enquiries.

he Hebrews, to call them by their most prehensive name, came up to the land Canaan, or Palestine, from Egypt. The Hebrew, which means *one from the side the river*, had attached to the settler, Abraham, some centuries before, n he had sojourned in the land ; it had g to his descendants when they were lling in Egypt, and it acquired a fresh ificance when for the second time they sed the river Jordan on their way from pt, and took final possession of the land anaan. Now it might have happened all we knew of their settling in Canaan, of the direction whence they emigrated, it have been summed up in the fact that

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they had come from Egypt. In that case we should just have noted the corroborating circumstances of their name implying that they came from the other side the river, of many of their laws and customs bearing the stamp of Egyptian origin, of traces of familiarity with the forms of Egyptian idolatry being found amongst them, and of their own constant tradition in later times referring to their Exodus from Egypt. But, on the other hand, we should have had some difficulty in explaining how a people so unlike the Egyptians should have come from Egypt; how so comparatively weak a people could have broken from the power of so mighty a monarchy as that of the Pharaohs; how a religion so opposite to that of Egypt could have been imported from Egypt; and how they could have made their way through hostile tribes and a difficult country in sufficient strength to wrest the land of Canaan from the possession of the indigenous inhabitants. But this task of weighing probabilities, and finding answers to difficulties, has been spared us by the preservation of the wonderful narrative of their Exodus.

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From this narrative we learn that for upwards of two hundred years the ancestors of the Jewish people had lived as strangers in Egypt, and had rapidly grown into a nation. At first treated kindly by the Egyptian government and people, they had afterwards become objects of suspicion, and then of oppression and ill-usage. The great public works which have at all times been a passion with Egyptian rulers, and which have absorbed such an infinity of lives, were used, but used in vain, as an instrument for their destruction. In spite of the severities of the task-masters and the frequent strokes of the rod, (exactly such as are often represented on ancient Egyptian sculptures,) the people grew and multiplied. At length the crisis of their national destiny was come, and what marked it, as well as, under God, wrought it about, was the raising up of a leader for them, one in every respect fitted for his great task. That leader was Moses.

We sometimes lose something of the force of the delineation of the great characters in scripture by viewing them too exclusively as passive instruments in the hands of God.

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But no small part of the lesson intended to be taught us by these delineations of character lies in the human qualities and conduct of the instruments so employed. In Moses we have a man of the very highest type of human excellence, natural and acquired, mental, moral, and spiritual. Beautiful as a child, so much so as to quicken his mother's love and attract a stranger's compassion, we may conclude that he possessed such advantages of manly beauty as have often been found not unimportant accessories in those who were leaders of the people. Nursed in the lap of luxury and in the palaces of kings, he only used such nurture as an opportunity for storing his mind with all the wisdom and learning which were thus placed within his reach, and training himself for mighty words and deeds. A stedfast lover of his own country and people under every temptation to forsake and disavow them, a generous helper of the oppressed at the risk of his own life and to the loss of his own splendid position and possessions; dignified, manly, and independent in poverty and exile, and as ready

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to succour the weak with no resources but his own prowess as he had been in the plenitude of his power; humble, reverent, and fearful before God, but dauntless, calm, and resolute in presence of the greatest potentate on earth, he had already given an earnest of what he was to be, before the great work of his life was begun. That work, as far as it is possible to describe it in two or three words, was to mould a gang of miserable galley-slaves into an independent nation, to lead out an unarmed multitude before the disciplined troops of the mightiest military monarchy in the world, to give the new-born nation laws which should last as long as the nation lasted, and should train them into fitness for a destiny wholly different from that of any other people; and, above all, to give them such a knowledge of the one living and true God as should be burnt into the whole national conscience, and stamp them with the mark of the people of God. This was the work given to Moses to do, and, by the help of God, he did it.

Let us try and seize upon two or three of

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the most prominent features of this work, and which bear most directly upon the Exodus which it is the purpose of this paper to illustrate and explain.

We will pass over the preliminary steps by which he infused heart into the downcast people, shook their craven fear of the mighty Pharaoh, recalled the memory of their favoured ancestors, raised them to a conscious belief and trust in Almighty God, and got the multitude into a state of readiness for the meditated flight. All this done, and the departure from the land of their bondage actually effected, what was most needful to be provided for, *first*, was safety from pursuit and attack. Of little use would it have been for the tribes to have escaped out of Egypt if their march, encumbered as they were with herds and flocks, with women and children, was open to the pursuit of the Egyptian hosts. Viewed in this light how wonderfully chosen was the Peninsula of Sinai for their temporary abode. The Red Sea placed an impassable barrier between them and their infuriated masters. The wilderness itself was inaccessible to an

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army ; its barren sands, its rugged mountain peaks, its narrow ravines, its dry waterless wastes, were so many secure and impregnable fortresses. Here the children of the Exodus might breathe freely, and exchange the slave's heart for that of the free man.

*Next*, they were to be permanently weaned from idolatry. They had been living all their lives under the deadly shadow of the grossest polytheism. In Egypt the gigantic temples which filled the land with their costly structures, the colossal statues which rose in such majestic forms before their eyes, the innumerable portraiture of birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things that met their eye at every turn, the deification of river and animal and mortal man, the powerful priesthood, the alliance of the “gods of Egypt” with the monarchy, all this and much more gave to idol-worship a power which we can hardly realize at the present day. When all the blessings of nature, and all the successes of war and politics, and all the incidents of every-day life, were in the unanimous opinion of the whole nation connected with the gods whose temples and sta-

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tues covered the land, it must have been very difficult to shake off the universal belief and rise to the conception of one invisible God. But where in the whole universe could true religion so powerfully assert its claims as in the grand solitudes of the Peninsula of Sinai ? Those granite peaks pointing up to heaven, those rugged rocks and fearful precipices, the pealing thunder reverberating amongst the sand-stone mountains, the beautiful patches of verdure gladdening the arid wilderness around, these all would speak with a solemn voice of Him who made them ; and the hearts of those who were thus separated from the world, and shut out from all the delusive voices of the world's idolatry, would be bruised and softened, and inclined to give heed to nature's solemn utterances. As they received the daily bounties of Providence amidst those natural temples raised to God's glory, there were no false priests to lure them from the truth, no lying images or pretended gods to put in a claim to their homage. They would feel that they were standing before God, receiving life and all *things* straight from His wide-open hand.

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*Thirdly*, contemplate the giving of the Law. Is it not a truly wonderful thing that the words which we write up in our churches here in England, in this age of railroads and electric telegraphs, which we teach our children with religious care, which we utter in our own worship, which we consider as comprehending the whole moral duty of man, should be the very words which were written by Moses on two slabs of the Sinaitic sand-stone, to be the religious charter of the children of Israel, between three and four thousand years ago. It was but the third month since they had fled out of Egypt, and they had drawn with all their hosts to the immediate neighbourhood of Sinai. Sinai—not the mountain so called by the monks, where the convent of St. Catharine stands, but the mountain now called Serbal<sup>a</sup>—rises in solitary grandeur from the valley which leads up to its base, and towers far above all the neighbouring heights. As you ap-

<sup>a</sup> There is a difference of opinion among travellers as to the true Sinai; but the view here taken has far the strongest external and internal evidence in its favour.

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proach it, the country, which had been arid and desolate in the extreme, becomes suddenly clothed with grass and trees; a beautiful stream waters the ground; a spacious grove of palm-trees, the only one in the whole district, affords a delightful shade; the acacia-trees and tarfeh-trees abound; pastures and herbs affording food for cattle grow plentifully on hill and vale. Here is the one spot where a tribe might encamp for any length of time, and find water and food, fuel and shade, to meet their wants in the winter cold and the summer heat. Here, then, Moses, who had known the spot when he fed the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, brought the tribes. And in the valley I have described, and another that, opening from it, leads straight to the foot of Sinai, the Israelites pitched their tents, or built booths with the trees which grew there, on either side of the stream that flows down the valley. It was a moment of deep expectation. The grand mountain, so unlike anything they had seen in the flat plain of Egypt, seemed to disdain its fellowship with earth and to claim kindred with the skies; and

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they gazed upon it from their tent doors in wonder. But they were forbidden to touch it, and bounds were set across the head of the valley which they might not pass on pain of death. A simple incident, too, here occurred, which must yet have been marvellously impressive. During their march through the wilderness they had had little leisure and less opportunity for washing their clothes. The sand and dust of the way, the sweat of their wearisome marches, and the blood of their sharp fight with the Amalekites, must indeed have soiled them; and these soiled garments must have seemed emblematic of their low estate. But now the order comes from their leader, "Let the people wash their clothes." And, lo! the many thousands of Israel hurry to the stream, and in its pure waters wash away the stain that defiled them. Surely as in that sacred spot they put on again their "fine linen white and clean," this washing must have seemed to them like the laver of regeneration, like the wiping away of all former degradations, the symbolic preparation for their becoming "the people of God."

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But to proceed. From that mountain was now proclaimed the law of the ten commandments. There, during his second seclusion of forty days, Moses wrote that law on two tables of stone which he had hewn out of the rock, and there he put into writing the first-fruits of that remarkable code, the Mosaic or Levitical law, which gave their form and fashion to the whole nation of Israel as long as they were a nation at all, and retains its hold upon them even to the present hour.

In close connection with this giving of the law was the rearing of the tabernacle. If in the days when the armies of Titus were encamped on the Mount of Olives, a Roman centurion, gazing upon the stately buildings and spacious courts of the Temple on the opposite height of Zion, had enquired what was the origin of those great buildings; or if, seven centuries earlier, a Babylonian captain had made a similar enquiry concerning the magnificent temple of Solomon, which stood upon the same site; they would have been told that those grand structures were but embellishments of the ori-

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ginal tabernacle which Moses had reared in the wilderness of Sinai, before the Mount of God. And they would have been told true. From the time of David, when we find the tabernacle on the high place at Gibeon<sup>b</sup>, we can trace it back to Shiloh, where it was in the days of Eli<sup>c</sup>, in the days of Phinehas<sup>d</sup>, in the days of Joshua<sup>e</sup>; thence to the plains of Moab, east of Jordan, where it was just before the death of Moses<sup>f</sup>; and thence through its forty years' wanderings to the spot where it was first reared before Mount Sinai. It was during Moses' first retirement of forty days to the summit of Sinai that the elaborate directions for building the tabernacle were given. And a stirring sight it must have been, after he came down, to see the various members of the congregation bringing the spoil which they had brought from Egypt three months before, linen and gold, and silver and brass, and skins and precious stones, and costly dyes of scarlet, purple, and blue, as materials with which to erect this tabernacle for

<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. xvi. 39.    <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. i. 9.    <sup>d</sup> Judg. xx. 18, 27, 28.    <sup>e</sup> Josh. xviii. 1.    <sup>f</sup> Deut. xxxi. 14, 15.

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the invisible God. Others brought their stores of acacia wood, which they had collected from the neighbouring mountains, either for fuel or for their booths; while the women, besides their personal ornaments, contributed their skill in spinning the wool from the flocks of goats. Others, again, who had probably learnt trades in Egypt, came forward as engravers, carvers, and embroiderers, and in a short time the whole work was put in hand. It was not quite twelve months since the Israelites had kept their first Passover in haste in the land of Egypt on the eve of their flight, when this tabernacle, the house of the invisible Lord who had redeemed them, was reared in the wilderness of Sinai. Fourteen days after, there in the still wilderness, far from their enemies and oppressors, they kept their second Passover<sup>s</sup>. The Mosaic ritual was

<sup>s</sup> It may be worth remarking that before the Passover of this second year, the lambing of the flocks which had been pastured in the wilderness of Sinai would have furnished a plentiful supply of lambs. Also that as the first Passover immediately preceded their flight from Egypt, so this second Passover was quickly followed by their march into the far less fertile

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thus inaugurated under circumstances the most striking. It is impossible to conceive a scene more impressive than the rearing of the tabernacle amidst the wild scenery of that secluded wilderness ; a temple without an image or an idol, but marked out by the pillar of cloud as the abode of God ; Moses looking on the many thousands whom he had brought out of Egypt, and labouring night and day to train them in the fear of God ; and that multitude in one united act of most solemn worship celebrating the anniversary of their redemption from bondage, by a rite which pointed with such singular expressiveness to a yet greater deliverance in ages to come.

It is not possible within the compass of this paper to go through the other scenes of the Exodus in detail, fraught with interest and instruction though they be. It must suffice to remind the reader that after this twelvemonth passed in the immediate neighbourhood of Sinai, where the Israel-region, rather the very barren one, of the wilderness of Paran. (Numb. x. 11.) This diminution in the number of the flocks would be most opportune.

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ites seem to have wanted for nothing, and where we never hear of a complaint or murmur, they started upon their journey northwards across the desert called in Arabic to this day El Tih, the desert of *the wandering*. Here began their sufferings from hunger and from drought ; here for thirty-eight years they wandered about, unable to advance to the land of Canaan. Here were their sore trials and terrible chastisements. Here in the bitterness of their spirit they formed the desperate resolve to elect a captain instead of Moses, who should lead them back again to Egypt. Here Aaron died, and Miriam his sister. Here Moses fell into his only recorded fault, and here his character as a leader and lawgiver was brought out and displayed in all its excellence. And now his work was done. He had led the people out from Egypt ; he had brought them to the very edge of the promised land ; he had conducted them to victory ; he had taught them line upon line, and precept upon precept, to know and to love their God ; and now his time was come to die. *But before his eyes closed in death he was*

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to see the promised land. So he went up to the top of Pisgah, "that is over against Jericho," and saw the whole land stretching before him in all its length and breadth, its goodly valleys and vine-clad hills, like fruit ripe for the gathering. And having seen it with his eyes, and once more heard with his ears the word of promise<sup>b</sup>, he died; and his record is, "Moses the man of God."

Such is the history of Moses and the Exodus, as far as it consisted of human actions and was the result of human virtue. It has been exhibited, as far as possible, in the foregoing pages as it might have appeared to any looker on at the time, who only saw the human actors, but was not cognizant of the mind and hand of God. To such, the passage of the Red Sea might have seemed the result of an extraordinary tide happening at a fortunate moment; the thunders and fire and the shaking of Sinai the natural effects of tempest and volcano; the manna an unusual abundance of the produce of the coun-

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 4.

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try<sup>1</sup>; the flights of quails the periodical migrations of birds of passage; and the whole scheme of the law and religion promulgated by Moses the offspring of a great human intellect, cultivated in the best schools of philosophy and science which the world then possessed. Nor would such views have been wholly destitute of truth. It is a fact that the dry land by which the Israelites crossed through the Red Sea was caused by an extraordinarily strong east wind, and no less true that there are fords in that sea which at particular times are practicable. It is a fact that the flights of quails occurred twice at exactly the same time of year; and that both the time of year and the spots where these great flights occurred, are those where these and other birds of passage have been seen even in modern times passing from Asia to Egypt in immense flocks, "darkening the air" by their numbers<sup>2</sup>. It is also true that Moses

<sup>1</sup> The tarfeh-tree exudes a gum which by many is identified with the manna.

<sup>2</sup> Such were seen at this very spot by Schubert, and quite recently by Dr. Stanley.

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was one of the greatest men of ancient or modern times. Such a view, then, is not wholly false, but it is miserably defective. It is like the view of one who reads a story in an imperfect manuscript, from which whole sentences or even pages have been lost. What remains is true, but incoherent and inexplicable. So is the story of the Exodus when viewed only as the work of man.

But how luminously does the Bible step in with its revelation of the mind and will and agency of God, and draw aside the veil which hid the motions of His omnipotent hand. Turn the full light of revealed truth upon the history of the Exodus, and in that light scan once more its incidents. They are a hundredfold more glorious, more significant, more instructive, more animating as read in that intenser light. We see them connected in one grand purpose with centuries past, and with centuries to come. It is one of the sublime characteristics of Holy Scripture that in it we have set before us the living personal agency of one unchanging Being, whose purpose works its irresistible way through a lapse of ages,

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without change, without decay, without forgetfulness, without interruption, without confusion, as it were threading its course through the maze of centuries and the entanglements of endless changes in the world's history, till it reaches its end at the very instant designed from the beginning. Thus with the Exodus. It is itself but a link in the chain which connects the fall of Adam with the birth of Christ, yea, with His Second Advent in the clouds of heaven. In the saving of Noah, in the blessing of Shem, and still more in the call of Abraham the Hebrew, we see this purpose advancing. The birth of Isaac, the election of Jacob, the selling of Joseph, the descent of the Patriarchs into Egypt, are all consecutive steps in the march of the grand epic towards its destined close. Then comes the affliction preparing the people to wish for deliverance, and uniting them in the bond of a common hatred of their oppressors. Then their extraordinary, though by no means miraculous, increase<sup>1</sup>. Then the

<sup>1</sup> For a masterly analysis of the increase of the descendants of Jacob in Egypt, see "The Exodus

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birth of Moses. And then, when everything had been thus as it were secretly prepared, the majestic interposition of the God of Israel. Pharaoh's puny arm is broken. The gods of Egypt are laughed to scorn. With a mighty hand Jehovah leads out His hosts in the presence of their enemies. At His bidding the sea withdraws its waters to make a way for His ransomed to pass over. At His bidding the same waves return to overwhelm His foes ; they sink like lead in the mighty deep. Then follows the giving of the law by direct revelation ; the preservation of the people by a mixture of ordinary and extraordinary providences ; the inspired teachings of Moses ; the manifestation of the Divine Presence both in mercy and in punishment, and at length the establishment of the Israelites in the land of Canaan according to the promise made to Abraham between four and five centuries before. Viewed in this its Scriptural light,

of Israel," by the Rev. T. R. Birks. It is there demonstrated that an average of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  sons to each father would give the required increase in the given time, reckoning thirty-one years to a generation.

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the Exodus assumes a wholly new significance. It is the history not of man only, but of God also. In it He who was revealed to Moses in the burning bush, on the granite peaks of Sinai, and in the familiar converse of the tabernacle, is revealed to *us* in all the purity and all the tenderness of His divine nature. His power, His providence, His mercy, His wisdom confront us, engraved in imperishable characters, as on the everlasting rock. Those peculiar, distinctive attributes of the God of revelation, faithfulness to His promise, mindfulness of His covenant, unchangeableness in His purposes of grace, are exhibited before our eyes in every step by which the children of Israel advanced from Goshen till they reached the promised land. But the Exodus tells us of even more than this. In the secret folds of that Fatherly bosom which is there laid bare to our view, we see the workings of a mightier love than that which redeemed the Israelites from the house of bondage. In the march from Rameses we discern the shadow of a more glorious march, and through a more awful deep, than

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that of Israel through the Red Sea. We see the power of one mightier than Pharaoh put to shame; we see a Leader greater than Moses, and an assembly more numerous than the hosts of Israel, exulting in their victory, on shores where no enemy can pursue them, and where the sighing of captives is never heard. It is to this view that the Church invites us when on this festal day she recites in our ears the story of the Passover and the passage through the Red Sea, and tells us in the same breath that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;" and that "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him." She would have us remember that when we were lying in the bondage of sin, God sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. She would have us remember that that descent into the depths of the sea, to rise on the other side in liberty and life, did both prefigure Holy Baptism as the appointed channel by which we pass from death unto

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life ; and did yet more gloriously typify the resurrection of Christ's redeemed to take possession of the land of rest prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And in the sure fulfilment to the seed of Abraham of the promise made to their fathers, she teaches us that we have exceeding great and precious promises, which cannot be broken, though all the powers of hell should combine to frustrate them, and all the sons of men should agree to disbelieve them. Such are the Church's lessons to us this day. May we read them not in vain ! May we read them by the light which Easter Day throws back upon the Old Testament histories, and which transforms them from narratives of surpassing interest into sermons of ineffable power. Above all, may we apply the type to ourselves as members of Christ's mystical body the Church, and go onwards in our Christian course in the consciousness that the blood of sprinkling is upon us, that we have passed through the sea which separates us from Egypt, and shall in God's own time enter into that land of promise, whither Jesus Christ is gone before us.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## EASTER MONDAY.

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### THE LORD'S DAY: ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

#### PART I.

THE observance of one day in the week, for the purposes of rest and worship, has so manifest a bearing on the religious interests of mankind, that it cannot but be of the highest importance that we should know, 1. the grounds on which it rests; and 2. the proper mode of keeping it.

And the present season, during which the Sunday stands out as the sole day of joy and festival, in a period otherwise set apart for mournful and humbling practices and remembrances, may well put us upon enquiring, what is its exact position in the Christian scheme of duties and observances; or why this exceptional honour is put upon

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it, so that it claims exemption from "the veil that is spread over all" other days, and lifts its voice of joy, however chastened and subdued in tone, "even out of the deep" of penitential sorrows, and in the presence of the Cross of Christ. Can it be that, as Sunday by Sunday comes round, we are brought face to face with an ordinance so ancient as to its date,—so profoundly-based as to its origin and significance,—so deeply stamped with the mintage and impress of God's Own Hand, as "with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever," "in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,"—so directly commended by Christ Himself to His Apostles, along with other mysteries and Sacraments of *unchangeable* character,—that no mere ecclesiastical appointment, however profitable to the soul, (yea though it were enjoined by the Apostles themselves, as this one of Lent may well have been,)—can possibly pull down this high Day from its lofty position, or cast more than the faintest shadow over that which is so ancient and mysterious, so joyful and so divine? Can it be, that  
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Sunday by Sunday, as the sweet and gracious Day, rich with the memories of Two Creations, comes round, there is vouchsafed to this weary world, and especially to the Church, and every faithful member thereof, so special and exceptional a Presence of Creator, and Saviour, and Sanctifier, that “the children of the Bridechamber cannot mourn, because the Bridegroom is with them?” Can it be, that, if we will, we are so “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day,” that Paradise is more than brought back to the soul; and body, soul and spirit are caught up half way to heaven already? It is even so. These things are true, and can be proved by most certain warrant of Scripture. Let us then briefly examine into the nature of this high Day, and into its claims upon our religious and most reverent observation.

In order to do this effectually, we must enquire into its history. And for this we must go back, unquestionably, to the creation of the world. For though some have strangely doubted, whether there was any observance of a Seventh Day before the

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Law of Moses, it is certain that Holy Scripture permits of no question on the subject. For, as distinctly as it is said in the first chapter of Genesis, that God “blessed” the creatures of His Hand, and man himself; so, no less distinctly, is it said in the second chapter, that He “blessed” the Seventh Day: and, moreover, that He also “sanctified it” or made it holy. And as we cannot for a moment suppose that the blessing then pronounced on all creatures was suspended until some future day, but that it took effect immediately; so neither have we any reason for imagining any such delay or suspension of the blessing and sanctification pronounced at the same time on the Seventh Day.

But let us attentively consider, next, what is the exact meaning of God’s “blessing and sanctifying” a particular day. This we can no otherwise judge of, than by considering what is meant when He is said to bless and sanctify places, persons, or things. *How* are they blessed and sanctified? or what makes them to be so? They are “blessed” when God’s peculiar favour, and a promise of good success for their proper

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ends, is secured to them ; as when it was said to man, “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” And they are “*sanctified*,” or made holy, when God vouchsafes to them a peculiar measure of *His Presence*. God’s Presence it is that makes one person, or place, or thing, holier than another :—angels than men ; men than the beasts of the field, saints than sinners ; Heaven than earth, churches than common houses ; Scripture and Sacraments than common books or common elements. And if God “*blessed*” a certain portion of *time*, it must needs be that He secured to it His peculiar favour, and therewith a capacity and meetness for fulfilling its high ends of refreshing man, and honouring God. If He further “*sanctified*” that portion of time, it must needs be that He imparted to it a peculiar measure of *His Presence*. Now we know not, it is true, what it is for one portion of time to be more filled with God’s Presence than another ; but neither do we understand how one place or person should enjoy more of His Presence than another. But of a certainty it is so : and so,

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portionably, we cannot be wrong in laying it down as the secret of the Sanctification of the Seventh Day, that God gives to it an especial measure of His Presence. Man's high and hallowed Day of the Week,—be it the *last* day of it, as of old, or the *first* day, as now,—is an “enclosed garden” wherein he walks with God; a Temple hewn out of Time; separated, as a church is, from common uses, and set apart by the sanctifying Presence of God, for the uses and actions which beseem that Presence, and are akin to it.

But, it may be asked, (by those more especially who would date the observance of the Seventh Day from the Law of Moses,) is it certain, that when God blessed the particular day on which He rested from the work of Creation, He intended thereby to bless and hallow *every recurrence of that day in time to come?* Can it be proved from Scripture, confirmed by the common consent and traditions of mankind, or supported by analogy, that it was so? Is it not more reasonable to suppose (such persons would say) that after that original seventh day, all

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days are really alike? that there is not, nor ever was, any peculiar mystery or holiness attaching to one day in the week above another; and does not the silence (as they assume) of Scripture,—the absence of the Sabbath in Gentile nations,—and the special Institution of it, apparently as a new thing, for Israel in the time of Moses, prove as much? I answer without hesitation, No. There is not a word of truth, not a particle of weight in these objections, by which even well-meaning men have sought to bring down to the level of a mere Jewish ordinance, or Christian ecclesiastical institution, the Divine and hallowed thing of which we speak.

Take, first, the reason of the thing. “Why doth one day excel another?” it was asked of old,—as the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus has recorded<sup>a</sup>,—“whereas the light of every day of the year is of the sun?” or why, further, should we suppose that there is, or can be, any mystery or virtue in the Seventh Day above the rest? And there

<sup>a</sup> Ecclus. xxxiii. 7, 8.

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are those who are not satisfied with the Wise Man's devout answer, "By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished, and He made seasons, and feasts to differ<sup>b</sup>; some of them hath He made high days, and hallowed them; and some of them hath He made ordinary days." Such need to be reminded, that the common experience of mankind and the researches of science alike testify that there *is* in all nature a mystery and virtue in the recurrence of the *seventh thing* :—the *seventh* note of the musical scale; —the *seventh* colour of the prism or rainbow;—above all in the recurrence of the *seventh day*, or the thrice seventh, in certain mysterious and inexplicable diseases of the body; so that the same symptoms or phenomena shall be found to recur, or a crisis to be reached, with the utmost punctuality, after that interval. This mysterious law of *periodicity*, as it is called, is accepted and reckoned upon in the calculations of medical science. And it stands side by side with the ancient Sabbath, and with the later

<sup>b</sup> Our version has "altered :" but the sense of the original is that given in the text.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Lord's Day, as a fact and a phenomenon of the same class, confirming and upholding, from natural observation, the probability of that which Scripture affirms: viz. that there should be one perpetually recurring Day in all the Seven, on which the blessing originally pronounced on the Seventh, and afterwards, as we shall see, on the First Day of the week, should devolve and be renewed unto the end of Time.

Nor does either subsequent Scripture, or the tradition of nations, fail to confirm the important position, that the blessing pronounced on the original Seventh Day was intended for all succeeding Seventh Days, and was actually enjoyed by them. No otherwise than on this supposition, can we account for the manifest recognition of a cycle or course of seven days by *Noah*, when he sent forth the dove; by *Jacob*, when he fulfilled a week of marriage festival for each of his wives; above all by the *children of Israel*, before the institution of the Law. For they manifestly knew already *which was* the Seventh day, when they were told not to gather manna upon it, but to gather upon

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the sixth day a double portion<sup>c</sup>. No otherwise can we account, again, for the knowledge of the seven days of the week, preserved alike in the classical<sup>d</sup> and the Teutonic nations, and derived from our heathen forefathers to ourselves. Some nations, indeed, as ancient Rome, had a week of *nine* days; but it has lately been shewn<sup>e</sup> that this was originally a week of seven, and was derived therefrom.

Thus do Nature, and the later Scriptures, and tradition, all concur to render it infinitely probable, to say the least, that when God blessed the original Seventh Day and hallowed it, He included in that blessing its recurrence ever after.

And in truth there is in such a seven-fold or septenary law as we have been tracing out, a manifest harmony with the

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xvi. 5, 23.

<sup>d</sup> See an article on the Days of the Week in the Philological Museum, by the Bishop of St. David's.

<sup>e</sup> *Origines Kalendariae Italicæ*, Preliminary Address, p. 17, by the Rev. E. Greswell. "The nundinal cycle was virtually the same with the hebdomadal; merely *in a different form.*"

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Being of Him from Whom both Nature and Grace proceed. As God is in His own proper Nature, and apart from His operations in the world, Threefold, as touching the number of Persons in His One Substance;—so, Scripture informs us, is He mysteriously apt to exhibit Himself according to a sevenfold or septenary law, in those operations. The One Spirit is in gifts and operations sevenfold: as such, Isaiah<sup>1</sup> tells us, did He rest upon Him Who alone received the Spirit without measure; as such He is exhibited to us in the Revelation, namely as the “Seven Lamps burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God.” How probable, that having thus in His Own Nature somewhat that is, however mysteriously, sevenfold, and having impressed that character of His on the light which we behold, and the air which conveys music to our ears; having on the seventh day ended all His work, He should also from the beginning have ruled men’s time, for purposes of spiritual profit, and of conforming them to His Own Likeness by the same

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xi. 2.

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law. Truly there is a marvellous fitness in our gladly placing ourselves, for the work of being so conformed, under that sevenfold law, by devout use of the Lord's Day. Well may we hope, if we yield ourselves up obediently to it, to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

## EASTER TUESDAY.

### THE LORD'S DAY: ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

#### PART II.

WE are next to enquire on what grounds God has made choice of the seventh day, in preference to any other in the week, to receive His Blessing, and to be observed by mankind for religious purposes. It is not an arbitrary command or blessing; the reason or ground of it is given. "God blessed the Seventh Day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had *rested* from all His work which He made." His Rest *in* it, is the reason of His Blessing *upon* it. What then was this mysterious Rest of God? And how did it minister an occasion for such an ordinance? The *Rest of God*, (which in the original means simply *cessation*

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*from work*, without any idea involved of fatigue, or needful repose,) was the attainment by Him of that point in the infinite course of years, at which His work in the Creation of the world, begun countless ages ago, and consummated in the Six Days, reached its completion, and its perfection. Not its *completion* only, because there was no more to be done; but its *perfection* also, because that which was made was perfectly good, all evil being at length driven out from it. It had not been so in the earlier stages of the work. Sin and death, the work of fallen angelic Spirits, had till now marred Creation. But now a pure and perfect work, with which Satan had not been allowed to intermeddle, had come forth from God's Hand. The great design of ages was accomplished; "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them:"—and so God at length "*ceased* from all His work which He had made." The accomplished triumph of goodness and beauty over wickedness and disorder,—this it was that marked and defined the Rest, Cessation, or "*Sabbath*" of God. And that triumph,

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Scripture assures us, ministered refreshment and joy to the Divine Mind. "In six days" (as we read in Exodus xxxi. 17) "the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the Seventh Day He rested, and was refreshed." And again, the 104th Psalm speaks of His "rejoicing in His works." Well might such a Rest be the occasion of such an Ordinance. Well might God Himself for ever after, as that day came round in the mysterious seven-fold cycle, have in memory and renew (if so we may speak) that original Triumph and Rest and Joy, (and so it is written, "The Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy GOD") : well revisit, with peculiar blessing, the world which then He made. Well might that be a day on which "Heaven's gate" should ever after be "open" more widely,

- \* "The Sundaisies of man's life,  
Thredded together on time's string,  
Make bracelets to adorn the wife  
Of the eternall glorious King.  
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope ;  
Blessings are plentifull and rife ;  
More plentiful than hope.
  
- The rest of our Creation  
Our Great Redeemer did remove

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and prayer should go up more acceptably, and grace be more largely poured down, and “the Angels of God ascend and descend” more freely “upon the sons of men.” Well, above all, might men be enjoined to hold that day in remembrance, the Day which witnessed the final “stilling of the Enemy and the Avenger,” and the completion of this goodly world to be the scene of their trial and their victory. Well might “that day be unto them for a memorial,” a day of thankful memories and elevating hopes, and be “kept as a feast to the Lord throughout their generations, a feast by an Ordinance for ever<sup>b</sup>. ”

And such, doubtless, would have been the case, I mean as to the perpetuation of the actual *seventh Day*, as the Day of rest and spiritual joy, to the end of time, had not sin entered into the world. But by that

With the same shake, which at His passion  
Did th' earth and all things with it move.  
As Samson bore the doores away,  
Christ's hands, though nail'd, wrought our salvation,  
And did unhinge that day.”

GEORGE HERBERT'S POEMS.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xii. 14.

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event, this goodly gift of Paradise was, like all others, marred and defaced, though not utterly destroyed. With the fall of man, the Sabbath, like man himself, entered on a new and humbling stage of its history. It could no longer enjoy that fulness of the Divine Blessing and Presence which belonged to it before ; for the sin of man now shut out that Presence. Yet the wreck of its former self *might*, and Scripture and Gentile tradition (as we have seen) testify that it *did* remain to comfort man in his fallen estate. It was, there is reason to believe, still observed by the devout with sacrifices and services. The *second* lamb, offered on the Sabbath day by the Law of Moses, was probably the remains of the patriarchal custom, handed down through Abraham. But such sacrificial modes of approach to God and the abeyance of His visible Presence even on that favoured day, mournfully proved how far it had fallen from its original height of privilege, and of efficiency for its purpose. The “blessing” and the “sanctification” were but a shadow of what had been once, and was destined to be yet again. The

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Sabbath, fallen from its high estate, was inadequate for its ancient purpose, and was destined in due time to pass into something better.

The Law of Moses, while it restored some of the privileges of the Sabbath, by once more bringing men nearer to God's visible Presence, added also to its *burdens*, by laying on it a necessity for strict bodily observances, the breach of which was punishable by death. Like the Mount, the Seventh Day brought God nearer indeed to man, and was as a temple wherein He might be approached: but it brought Him near in terrors, and therefore, like the Mount, needed to be fenced around with threatenings lest they should die. Man could not yet endure, without special precautions, the Presence of God. The ancient Rest of God now cast a lurid shadow, rather than, as of old, a cheering light and warmth upon the day. Under one aspect, indeed, it was a "delight," because "holy unto the Lord, and honourable;" but from another point of view it was a

<sup>°</sup> Isa. lviii. 13.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

burden, the badge of a cruel bondage under the elements of the world. Spent part in joy, in remembrance of the Creation, and of the deliverance out of Egypt (as it should seem) on that day; part in terror, under a sense of the terrific threats of the Law; it still needed, manifestly, to be re-made altogether, ere it could bear any close resemblance to the Sabbath days of Paradise. And, accordingly, St. Paul enumerates it among those "beggarly elements," that is, poor and feeble means of grace, inadequate to salvation; "the meats and drinks and holy days, and the new moons, and the *Sabbath days*, which were a shadow of things to come;" and of which the "body" or glorious reality could only come with "Christ."

But at length the last stage in the history of the Great Day of observance dawned upon the world. By the Death of Christ, and by His Rest in the grave, and by His Rising again, the whole state of things,—the condition of ruin and corruption, and unfitness for the Presence of God,—which had existed from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, underwent a complete abolition and

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reformation. Everything pertaining to that old system went down with Christ into His grave, and arose with Him, cleansed and renewed, at His resurrection. The uncleanness of the world, with its unfitness to enjoy God's Presence, was done away, once for all, by His One Sacrifice. There was no longer clean or unclean, Jew or Gentile, far off or near; all had died, all had risen again in the Body of Christ. And among the things that died and rose again, not destroyed but transfigured, was the ancient Sabbath Day. As the plant from the seed which dies in the ground, so from the old Sabbath, fulfilled and buried in the grave of Christ, sprang up the glorious efflorescence of the Lord's Day, the Christian Sunday. With the Personal Body of Christ, the Day of Christ too arose, re-made and glorified.

That this is no mere imagination, but that such a transformation of the old Sabbath into the new Lord's Day really took place, is plain from Holy Scripture.

That our Lord did honour and glorify one day in the week by His Resurrection upon it, namely the First Day, is unquestioned.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Neither (as must be manifest) is it possible to estimate too highly the glory and honour thereby put upon that particular day. Since the first dawn of Creation when the morning stars sang together,—since the first commencement of the Six Days' Work, when God said “Let there be Light,”—since the consummation of that work on the Seventh Day, there had been no such Event, no such Day as this. The day of Christ's Resurrection was at once the dawn, and the completion, of a New Creation. It was the beginning and the end: it corresponded at once to the First Day and to the Seventh Day of the old creation. Nor can we deny to that wonderful Day a Presence of God, and therefore a sanctification, far superior to that which He vouchsafed to the old Sabbath: since by the Incarnation and Resurrection, God is far more intimately present with all Flesh, and specially with His Church, which is His Body and His Spouse, than He ever was before. And lest we should doubt that this Day was to succeed to all the honours of the old Day of observance, now dead and buried in His grave, our Lord in two ways

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made it plain that it was to do so. First, by appearing to His Disciples on the recurrence of the Day,—the eighth day after,—thus practically re-enacting the old septenary law<sup>d</sup>: and secondly, by bidding them henceforth hold their solemn weekly feasts of remembrance no longer in memory of the First Creation and the Coming out of Egypt, but in memory of His New Creation and New Redemption. Henceforth, “as oft as ye solemnly eat or drink, do it *in Remembrance of Me.*” And as the Sabbath had been hitherto, for the Priest, the day of offering and eating the Shew-bread<sup>e</sup>,—that is, their

<sup>d</sup> St. John xx. 19, 26:—“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst. . . . And after *eight days* again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst.”

<sup>e</sup> Leviticus xxiv. 5—9:—“And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof. . . . And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. . . . Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Communion Day,—and for all the people a day of joyful and religious feasting and service; so, it is manifest, was the First Day of the week to be their Feast Day, and high day of Service, now. And such, accordingly, we find it to have been with the Apostles. The first day of the week is their day of “breaking of bread:” or of celebrating the Holy Communion, and is called by the solemn title of “the Lord’s Day.”

And how wonderfully the new observance grew out of the old, is seen at once, if we observe that the close of the Sabbath formed the eve and commencement of the Sunday. Accordingly in all Churches throughout the world, some part of the Sunday Service,—in our own Church the Collect,—is used the evening before: in token that the root of the Lord’s Day still lies deep in the ancient Sabbath;—which indeed on that account, and for the sake of its old associations, still

And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’: and they shall eat it in the holy place.”

<sup>1</sup> *Acts xx. 7:—“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.”*

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enjoys, in the East, high consideration as a Festival.

Thus then was completed the wondrous history of the Church's great High Day of the week. Enacted in Paradise; descending, though shorn of its glory, to the old world; revived in part, with new gifts, but also with new terrors, under the Law; buried, together with the rest of the old state of things, in the grave of Christ; rising, glorified with Him, and filled with His Presence, at His Resurrection; — it comes to us “with an exceeding weight of glory.”

And from the consideration of its history, the true mode of observing the day is most easily gathered. It has inherited, we must remember, both the old Blessing and Sanctification, and the New. It is at once God's Resting Day, “the Sabbath of THE LORD our God;” and Christ's Resurrection Day, or the “Day of the Lord” Jesus. In this twofold and conjoint character, it is, first of all, full of the Presence of God and of Christ. As such, how reverently should it be approached as a Temple and Place of Presence.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

In two characters does God specially abide therein — and invite us to imitate Him. He renews, we must reverently believe, the Rest and the Joy which followed the original creation. And into the participation of that Rest are we invited to enter, by “ceasing from our own works, as God did from His :”—not as from that which is evil, but from that which, so far as we have been able to cast out from it the spirit of evil, is a matter of joy and thankfulness; God’s own work wrought in us and by us.

But, secondly, the Presence of God which above all fills the Day with its glory and its sanctification, is that of Christ Risen. And into the participation of His Resurrection are we more especially invited then to enter. That event brought us into a wonderful nearness to God, and capacity for His Presence. At our Baptism took place our personal admission thereinto. And on this Day do we exercise week by week, in the most exalted manner, the privilege then secured to us. Sunday “doth represent unto us,” and bring to us for our joyful realization, “our profession,” and our position as

### THE LORD'S DAY:

Christians, "which is gladly to rise with Christ."

And that these high thoughts of rest from this world's work, (however purified,) and of risen life with Christ, may not lack due media of action and expression, our great Day brings us in both respects special means of Communion with God. By that exalted act of sacrificial worship and participation, which our Lord Himself solemnly attached to the Day, we discharge with full effect, as far as mortals may, the duties of thankful Rest from, and dedication of, the labours of the week past, and of our whole lives; and again of joyous rising, into the heavenly sphere of things into which Christ entered at His Resurrection, and in which He now abides. Making humble oblation of ourselves, with all that we are, or do, or have done, to God in Christ; receiving participation, through Christ, in the things of God provided for us; we keep at once, in the Holy Communion, and in the other services and prayers, public or private, the day of thankful Rest and the day of joyful Resurrection.

## ITS HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Nor will the associations and privileges of the day, rightly understood and duly taken home to the heart, fail to be a sufficient guide as to the manner of spending those parts of it which are not employed in direct acts of religious Service. Only too gladly shall we lay aside for the day whatever takes from it the sense of rest, or cessation from our own works; and the sense of being lifted into an unusual degree of nearness to God, and of communion with Him. The realized Presence of the God of Creation, and of the Lord of grace and glory, will lend even to those actions which are common to all days alike, a calmer tone, and to those refreshments of body or mind which Nature craves and grace forbids not, a more regulated cheerfulness. We shall realize, in common meals, somewhat of the feeling which must have come upon "the nobles of Israel," who being taken up into the Mount, "saw God, and did eat and drink":<sup>6</sup>—and in common conversation,

<sup>6</sup> Exodus xxiv. 9—11. "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there

THE LORD'S DAY, &c.

when the smile and the laugh light up with touches of natural cheerfulness the leisure hours of the Christian Lord's Day, we shall not forget who was present at a like scene in Cana of Galilee, but shall "so talk, as knowing that the Lord hears us<sup>h</sup>."

was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

<sup>h</sup> "Ita fabulantur, ut qui sciant Dominum audire." Tertullian, quoted in the "Christian Year," Second Sunday in Advent.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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### SINA'I.

THERE are only two countries of the world whose natural features are connected with a revelation of God to man—Palestine, and the Peninsula of Sinai. Many of the hallowed spots of the former are known with certainty, having been pointed out all along by unbroken tradition. The traditions of the other district, although certainly 1,300 years old, do not probably go back much further, thus leaving an interval of 1,800 years between the events which hallowed the places and the rise of the traditions which connected together each event and the spot where it happened. It seems strange at first that this should be so, strange that a spot so closely connected with the rise of the nationality of Israel, and so

## SINAI.

accessible from Palestine, should not have been continually visited throughout the life of the nation by those who would have loved to trace with devotion every rock, and stone, and stream, so closely associated with the origin of their national life. But there is no hint given us in Scripture that any such pilgrimages were made. Elijah's visit seems to stand out, not as one of many, but as the effect of God's extraordinary dealings with him alone. And the whole tone of the prophetical Scriptures, although acknowledging the sanctity of Sinai, seems intended rather to divert the mind of the Israelite from the desert to Palestine, from Sinai to Zion. And if the Jew was thus led to turn away from Sinai hallowed by the delivery of the Law, still more was the Christian likely to turn away, when the teaching of the Gospel had pointed out the inferiority of that Law, and had hallowed another land to be to Christianity for ever the holy place of the revelation of the Most High.

And so it seems that it was not from the holy associations that cling to Sinai, so much

*as from the natural fitness of the district*

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for the dwellings of monks and hermits, and its nearness to Egypt the land of monasticism, that in the sixth century its solitudes became peopled with Christian life. Soon a locality for every event of the Exodus was sought and found. It was unfortunate, however, that they who thus first localised the events sought rather for the traces of those incidents of which there was not likely to survive any memorial, than for the general features of the scenes described, which must remain fixed and unchangeable as the mountains themselves. Thus while seeking to identify the spot where the bush burned with fire but was not consumed, and discovering as was supposed the mould in which Aaron cast the molten calf, and the rock from whence the water issued at the summons of the rod of Moses, they neglected to search for a scene whose general features would meet the requirements of the account of the revelation of God to the encamped tribes, by the Uncreated Voice, from the midst of the cloud and fire which enveloped the mountain side<sup>a</sup>. Such require-

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xix., xx.

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ments are, a great plain on which all or nearly all the people might be encamped<sup>b</sup>, in front of a mountain rising out of that plain with precipitous cliffs<sup>c</sup>. It is only within the present century that travellers have seen the importance of looking for such a combination of plain and cliff, by no means a common thing in the midst of the long winding wâdys and broken heights of Sinai. But such a scene, very soon after attention had been turned in that direction, was discovered by Dr. Robinson, and has since been examined and described by many succeeding travellers. That it should have been found in the near neighbourhood of the traditional sites is certainly not unsatisfactory, pointing as it does to the possibility that the monks may have been directed in their choice, out of the many summits of the mountain group, to that one about which even then lingered some unbroken tradition that it was the Sinai of the Exodus. The scene is thus described by one of the most recent travellers<sup>d</sup>:—“No one who has ap-

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xix. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Stanley, “Sinai and Palestine.”

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proached the Râs Sufsâfeh through that noble plain (the Wâdy er Râhah), or who has looked down upon the plain from that majestic height, will willingly part with the belief that these are the two essential features of the view of the Israelite camp. That such a plain should exist at all in front of such a cliff is so remarkable a coincidence with the sacred narrative, as to furnish a strong internal argument not merely of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described by an eye-witness. The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff, exactly answers to the ‘bounds’ which were to keep the people off from ‘touching the mount.’ The plain itself is not broken and uneven, and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could ‘remove and stand afar off.’ The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in

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lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of ‘the mount that might be touched,’ and from which the ‘voice’ of God might be heard far and wide over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys.”

Let us recall to mind the circumstances which have hallowed this scene for ever. Nearly two months have now elapsed since “that night to be much remembered,” the night which delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and left its image impressed indelibly on the history of the Israelite nation. Egypt and the life of servitude have been left behind; the life of freedom and of the desert have begun; the strangeness of that life has in some degree begun to wear away; the undisciplined mob which had witnessed the discomfiture of the serried ranks of the pursuing Egyptian army, has now become somewhat more regular and organized than it was at first. But each day still brings its new dangers, its new difficulties, and displays the new and strange resources of their great leader. To those

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who had never before been away from the rich alluvial plain of Egypt, where all was flat and green and fertile, the towering peaks, and bare precipices breaking in abruptly on the fertility of the valleys, must have been a continued marvel. Into the recesses of the mountains they have now advanced. Whither will their leader take them? They know that they are going to meet their God here. They have come for that express purpose. This mountain district has indeed long been regarded even by the heathen desert tribes, and probably by the Egyptians too, as a sanctuary. And now, as their route lies through the winding ascending valleys, they may see, carved deep in the soft sandstone of the cliffs, the traces of many former pilgrims to the great sanctuary of the desert. Mount Serbal was probably the object of these pilgrimages. But it is not on the mountain desecrated by heathen worship and idolatrous rites that the God of Israel will reveal Himself; and so Moses passes by the ascent to this mountain, and climbs by succeeding ascending valleys to the higher regions of the mountain

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range. In one rich valley, the very garden of the mountains, they meet their first enemy, and win their first victory. But even here they pause not; onwards and upwards they must go. At last, where the Wâdy er Râhah expands into a great upland plain, with the high precipices of the Râs Sufsâfeh in front of them hiding the summit of Sinai from their view, they encamp, with the intimation from their leader that here their journey is for a time ended, that here the Lord will reveal Himself to them. The pillar of cloud and fire had probably rested on the mountain, to point it out as peculiarly the holy place of the Most High. Moses now ascends the mountain to learn the will of God. He is told to return to the people with this message from God, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” This was the direct mes-

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sage from God for which Israel had toiled through the desert. These were the preliminaries of the covenant which God would make with them—a promise, with a condition. *The promise*—that Israel should be God's peculiar people. *The condition*—that Israel should be a holy nation. The people all profess their readiness to enter into covenant with God on these terms. But as the covenant was to be concluded through Moses, it was necessary that he should receive special credentials from God, so that all the people might know that he was chosen to be the mediator of this covenant between God and them. For this purpose God promised to come down and speak to him, audibly, in the presence of all the people\*. And as the mountain on which God was about to reveal Himself would become thus hallowed, it was necessary to consecrate it, that is, to set it apart as a holy thing which might not be irreverently touched. For this purpose a fence was to be set about the precipitous cliffs of the mountain which abutted on the plain, so that it might not

\* Exod. xx. 9.

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be inadvertently approached by man or beast. Three days were the people to prepare themselves for the manifestation of God. On the third day Moses marshals them in front of the great precipices which have been thus consecrated. And there they await the revelation of their God. They know not, indeed, how He will reveal Himself. A great thick cloud covers the mountain, (it had probably been there since break of day<sup>1</sup>,) and extends so low down as to involve at least the summits of the precipices before the people. And now the stillness is broken. There are thunders, and lightnings, and a sound like the voice of a trumpet reverberating amongst the cliffs. Then an earthquake. "And Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." Then "Moses spake and God answered him by a voice" from the midst of the cloud. And now Moses ascends the mountain, but is ordered to come down again, and repeat the warnings to the people not to

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xx. 16.

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break through the fence. Whilst he is below among the people, God Himself, from the midst of the cloud and fire, proclaims the ten commandments so that all Israel hears. This is the great revelation of God which was made on Sinai, *the fundamental moral law* proclaimed to Israel by the Uncreated Voice, and through Israel, as a nation of priests, to the whole world. And how did Israel receive the revelation? They fled in terror, and stood afar off gazing on the wondrous scene<sup>s</sup>. And they sent to Moses and said, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” And thus Israel gave up the privilege of being a nation of priests, and of coming directly into the presence of God.

And here we may well pause, and gather up a few reflections upon this great revelation of Sinai; for we have arrived at the end of the revelation which was made immediately by God—made, too, not for Israel only, but for the whole world. The rest of the Law, as delivered to Israel, was delivered through Moses, and was inferior to

<sup>s</sup> Exod. xx. 18.

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the above Law in that its ordinances were only temporary ; some of them, such as the institution of a priestly order, appearing to arise out of this refusal of Israel to be, as God proposed, a nation of priests, with special and immediate communion with Him ; and some of them being merely types and shadows of things belonging to the second and fuller revelation of God to man, when the true Israel of God was indeed developed as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people<sup>h</sup>. ”

Now in looking back upon this scene, and considering the import it has for us, we shall do well to turn away from what was temporary and peculiar, and dwell more particularly upon what was everlasting and universal. Thus we may well not perplex ourselves with any discussions as to figures, whether of time or quantity. We need not distress ourselves even if difficulties arise in making the account of details of this sort consistent throughout. Let us turn to the general features of the revelation made on Sinai. And if we should find, as indeed we

<sup>h</sup> 1 St. Pet. ii. 9.

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shall, that these general features are not only consistent with that other and greater revelation of God to man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but actually foreshadow it and point to it in a thousand ways, then we shall surely have a convincing proof for ourselves, that the revelations are revelations of one and the same God. And if the Scriptures, treasured by the Israelites and received by us through them, point so plainly to the Christian revelation, in which the Israelites do not believe, then it is plain that Israel cannot have devised those Scriptures by human ingenuity, but must have received them from God Himself.

As, indeed, prophecies fulfil themselves over and over again in the course of time, each successive fulfilment becoming more and more accurate, more and more close to the language of the prophecy, so indeed does this revelation on Sinai, looked upon as a prophetic act, fulfil its first intention more and more closely in the future revelations of God to man. Thus, in the revelation as it was first made on Sinai, Israel was to be a peculiar people, a kingdom of

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priests, a holy nation. Now this, although not exactly carried out at the time, was more perfectly carried out in the next great revelation of God to man in the person of His Son, when the Church, the true Israel of God, consecrated by the blood of a better sacrifice than that which under the cliffs of Sinai consecrated Israel to God' in the first covenant, became in a peculiar sense a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. But not until the next great revelation will the programme of Sinai be fully carried out, when He, who has redeemed us by His blood, will have made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign with Him<sup>1</sup>.

These reflections, perhaps, do not appear so pertinent, nor the analogies so apposite, as many others that might be drawn. And doubtless the hearty and devout Christian will love to dwell rather on the more striking, more singular analogies than such as the above. He will see along the whole path of the wanderings of Israel from Egypt to Palestine the tracks of the Redeemer's feet.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 10; xx. 6.

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He will see His humanity and His divinity emblazoned in the pillar of cloud and fire; he will see His life-giving power in the rock of living water; he will see in the rod which struck that rock a figure of the rood from contact with which Christ gave life to the world. In the ark which contained the two tables of the Law, the manna, and the rod, he will see Christ, who contains all the treasures of wisdom and grace and justice, teaching us by the first, feeding us by the second, and ruling us by the third. In the altar of earth, again, he will see Christ, who took our earthly flesh upon Him that He might offer up our prayers and repentance as a sacrifice to God. It is unnecessary to point out the plainer and more generally known emblems of our Lord. But with reference to all such it is true that, however comforting and pleasant it is for confirmed Christians to dwell on them, however precious they may be to us as pearls gathered from the depths of Scripture, they will only be despised and rudely trampled under foot, if we inconsiderately offer them for the contemplation of those who regard the Bible as

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no better than other books, and who, searching its pages with minute and suspicious eye to find, not its harmonies but its difficulties, find indeed what they seek for.

However, let it be so. Let us nevertheless delight to look back and trace the Redeemer's footprints from the first page to the last. Let us love to mark how good men of old recognised the first glimpses of the daylight which we enjoy. Let us listen for the first whisperings of a Redeemer's love to a sinful, ever backsliding world; and we shall soon learn to admire the unity of God's dealings with man, and to reverence the inspiration of that wonderful volume, which has in such varied form repeated one uniform tale of God's redeeming love to man.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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## BALAA M.

BALAA M'S history is undoubtedly very remarkable, not less for the faithful portraiture drawn in it of his moral character, than for the attendant external circumstances. The miracle of the speaking ass, attested by the Apostle St. Peter, is hardly more wonderful than the utterances which proceeded from his own lips when we consider who he was. He was a prophet of God, but not chosen from out the Lord's people, a native and inhabitant of that distant land from which, centuries before, God had called the first founder of the race of Israel. His fame as a prophet had spread southwards and westwards, so that Balak thought it worth while to fetch him this vast distance to procure a curse from his mouth upon Israel. It is not a little won-

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derful that Balaam should have known so much as he did know of God and His ways. Whence did he derive this knowledge?

More wonderful still is that prophecy of the Messiah as the “Star,” the remembrance or tradition of which probably tarried among Balaam’s countrymen till the time of its fulfilment, and was in the minds of those Eastern wise men as they followed the miraculous star which led them to the stable in Bethlehem. Alas for Balaam! “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee.” “I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh.” He shall ever be “afar off” from Balaam!

But wonderful also is the description of Balaam’s character. Not that he was really different from other people. Perhaps it is because it is so like what we find commonly amongst ourselves, and we are surprised when we see it set out so plain before our eyes, that we wonder at it. Certain it is that, rightly understood, the principles so to speak of Balaam’s misconduct are the principles which actuate very many Christians in all ages, and the snare in which he was taken

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is one towards which very many, especially in this country, seem to be turning their steps.

Let us now fix our thoughts on two points in his history.

I. His inconsistency, and the self-deceit which caused it.

II. The fault or sin from which this sprang.

I. Balaam when sent for by the king of Moab, refused to accompany the messengers because God forbade him to go. When a larger and more dignified embassy came the second time, he hesitated, trying to obtain from Almighty God a relaxation of the former prohibition. Failing in that, he went in opposition to God. But even then he maintained to the king of Moab beforehand that he could not and would not speak otherwise than God directed him, and throughout his four grand utterances he preserved this word unbroken. No word of cursing passed his lips, though he longed for the permission to curse. Against his own interest, which he eagerly desired to further, he spake in four successive strains the sen-

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tence of blessing. And amongst those strains were holy words, words of holy aspiration, words which shew that Balaam's conscience, though dark, was not wholly without light; that a better feeling existed within him, though he struggled against it. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Yet when Balaam saw that no mischief could come on Israel through his words, he devised the diabolical design of bringing a curse upon them by leading them into deadly sin. It was his Satanic counsel to Balak to make the women of Moab and Midian a snare to the men of Israel, a snare into which they too easily fell, their fall bringing on them from God that very mischief which Balak desired. Thus Balaam lent himself to Satan, did Satan's work; was as Satan himself, the adversary and murderer of God's people by tempting them to their soul's destruction.

We have, then, in him an instance of a bad man, not scrupling to go to the furthest length of wickedness, eager and determined, if possible, to curse those whom God

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declared blessed, and ready to compass his end with weapons fresh from the forges of hell, who was nevertheless held back by certain religious scruples so as not to pronounce words of cursing with his lips, and able to entertain religious thoughts, and wishes, and hopes. Strange inconsistency ! Strange deceit of his own heart ! How came it that he did not see and feel that the two things could not consort together ? that the spirit of Satan could not suit with the death of the righteous ?

But is this inconsistency really an uncommon thing ? Is it not what we find existing in a greater or less degree in the world at large, sometimes carried to an extreme, as with Balaam, sometimes in a modified form in what are called “respectable” people ?

We see bad men doing, like Herod, “many things” belonging to religion, or with some particular scruple about some particular course of conduct. For example, a man constantly indulging in intoxication, or swearing in almost every sentence he speaks, nevertheless is often regular at

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church on Sundays, and says his prayers punctually ; or a man living in avowed adultery will shrink from uttering a profane expression.

Again, how commonly do we see persons regular in their religious duties, apparently (and let us not doubt really) sincere in their service of God, yet giving way to practices and habits which God declares as an abomination to Him ! The truth is, that men deceive themselves to a fearful extent as to their religious state. They will not examine themselves thoroughly, they content themselves with a superficial view, just to satisfy or quiet conscience, instead of probing, like a surgeon, with an instrument that goes deep within, that the truth may be made known. As a man whose worldly affairs are in an uncertain state, refuses to look through his books and strike a balance, for fear of finding the balance on the debtor side, so do we refuse to examine our lives for fear of two results : *first*, of being made unhappy by finding ourselves wrong and in danger ; *secondly*, of having to give up practices to which we are addicted.

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Two pieces of counsel let us advance.

1. You find so many other persons deceiving themselves. Mistrust yourself; be pretty sure that you are doing the same. Why should you be the exception to this general rule? Do you wish to discover in what matter you deceive yourself, where your inconsistency is? Then

2. Think what there is that an enemy would be likely to say against you, and the world would be likely to believe if it were said. The chances are that that is a thing in which you are really offending, while you do not like to allow as much to yourself.

Balaam, then, may teach us a wholesome lesson respecting our own self-deceit.

II. But we may learn yet another lesson from him respecting the cause or spring out of which this self-deceit flowed. What was Balaam's besetting sin, the element in his character which gave the point, motive, colouring to everything he did? It was the sin of covetousness. "The rewards of divination," "the wages of unrighteousness," the silver and gold which Balak dangled, as it were, before his eyes, as the bait where-

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with he sought to secure his services, these were Balaam's snare. Balaam in the Old Testament, and Judas in the New, are set forth as the great warnings to us of the consequences of loving money.

It is impossible to deny that love of money is a crying evil of our people at this time. It may almost be given as a distinguishing feature in the character of the British nation. A commercial population, as we are, extending our influence into every remote corner of the world, to bring from thence every imaginable treasure and to carry thither our own various productions, we are essentially a money-making people. Endowed by God with great wealth and with the means of increasing wealth, we look on this as the brightest spot in our fortunes and condition. "A nation of shopkeepers," as we have been called, we have come to think that this shop-keeping and its results are the highest end of life.

It is quite unnecessary to ask whether money is or is not considered the grand test of real greatness and influence. Everybody knows and feels that it matters little what

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a man's antecedents are, what his other present circumstances, what his moral condition,—if only he have abundance of money he may do what he pleases, all are ready to bow the knee before him, to yield to his pleasure, to obey his command, to minister to his gratifications, to flatter his pride. He obtains an influence which a reputation for moral excellence, and even deep religious principle fail to bring to those who possess them.

Again, money is pursued among us as the great end of life. The very language in which we speak of it, as the chief thing, and the great “wherewith,” the congratulations poured upon those who receive accessions of property, are sufficient to shew the high esteem in which it is held. Places, occupations, companionships, callings, are sought out and filled, not because of the good which can be done in them, or for the moral benefits derived through them, nor even for the intellectual attainments which they open out, but for their money-value. There are of course brilliant exceptions to this rule; but that such is the general rule

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there can be but one opinion. To us, then, as a people, and to those classes among us more especially which may be called the money-making classes, those who are engaged in trade and business of every description, Balaam stands forth as a warning. Holy Scripture speaks in no doubtful language about the dangers of covetousness. "The love of money is the root of all evil;" "They that will be (i.e. wish to be) rich . . . fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition;" "Covetousness, which is idolatry;" "The deceitfulness of riches . . . chokes the Word."<sup>a</sup> It may be as well to bring forward some illustrations of these solemn truths, as we find them in actual life.

1. See how love of money absorbs the whole heart of those who indulge it. Sometimes as a fretting care, because he cannot get it; sometimes as the possession in which he delights, which makes him long for more, it occupies all the thoughts of the man who gives way to it. However other things may have gained his attention previously,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; Col. iii. 5; St. Matt. xiii. 22.

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they by degrees give way to this, and that which concerns it. His pursuits all turn into the money-making direction ; his conversation is all of such matters ; what he reads has a commercial tendency : early and late his mind is upon gain.

2. It destroys even natural affection. What brings disputes, quarrels, heartburnings among brothers and sisters ? What causes undutiful children ? See a family at variance, and ask the cause. In nine cases out of ten it is about money. A father or other relation has died without a will, and they are quarrelling over his miserable money. Look at that wretched miser taken in a fit while counting over some of his vile hoards, his body wasted, his garments in rags, while thousands of pounds' worth of property, in coin and deeds, is in the very chamber where he is found dead ! Look at those neighbour tradesmen, living within sound of the same church-bell, worshipping within the same walls, hearing the same sermon, in their secret hearts almost hating each other, forming schemes to damage each other's prospects,

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and why? because one is running into the other man's custom.

3. It encourages all manner of bad feelings, "many foolish and hurtful lusts." What, in these days of competition, is thought of selfishness, grasping at every opportunity to seize it before another can take it? Or how many mean and dirty actions are done in secret to divert the course of gain from another channel into our own? But perhaps the most "hurtful" of all these "lusts" is the dishonesty which is fed in the money-maker's heart. He finds others playing tricks, and practising what are vulgarly called "dodges," which at first seem to himself unfair, false, dishonest, but which by degrees he comes to think only part of the ways of business. And then he violates his own conscience by practising them likewise. The keen edge of the true Christian conscience is blunted, and he becomes *a thief*. And with all this, like Balaam, he deceives himself that he is doing his *duty*; he must not let others carry off all the trade. He has his family to provide for, his position to maintain, his talents to

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employ and improve; he must not by over-particularity and too great strictness drive good customers away, or lose the advantage of the change in the market. ‘It is only the way of trade,’ he says to himself, and so tries to stifle that conscience which is the voice of God within him.

4. Once more, it saps all religious principle. While men are caring for money, thirsting for it and seeking it so eagerly, they lose their relish for religious things. Besides deadening their conscience, as we have said, they separate themselves from acts of religion, which is both a cause and effect of such deadening. All religious exercises, their private prayers, their family devotions, their Bible-reading, their attendances at church, are neglected or squeezed into the smallest possible space.

As money-making occupies more time, there is a narrower margin left for devotions. Letters have to be written, books to be made up, difficulties to be solved up to a very late hour at night; everything which interferes with this is an interruption. Then Sunday is robbed, first less openly, then

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more avowedly. Late hours on Saturday night cause late rising on the Lord's Day,—hurried preparations for church, perhaps total neglect of Morning Service—sleepiness during the service,—letters to be read, orders taken, engagements fixed on that holy day,—newspapers examined either for the money-intelligence, or because there has not been leisure for this during the week,—Communions intermitted, after a time wholly discontinued, *first*, because there is not time to prepare for them; *secondly*, because there is a feeling within that the temper of mind is not suited to that blessed Sacrament.

Well may Holy Scripture call it “*filthy lucre!*” It is as bad as drunkenness, though not so commonly revolting to the eye: it has a refined filthiness of its own, the very refinement helping to deceive the man who is poisoning himself hourly with its fatal draught.

What, what can be done to snatch a victim out of the hands of this usurping tyrant, this monster enemy of our busy countrymen? A hint or two must suffice.

I. Let every one watch against it, and

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pray against it. This would be a great thing if we could ensure its being done. If every one who reads this Tract would make it part of his own prayers that he might be delivered from the sin of loving money, something real would be gained. But especially is this needed for those who are most exposed to the temptation, those in trade and business. By the tradesman's till, at the merchant's office-door, in the banker's safe, lies this serpent with her deadly fangs. Oh, "Watch and pray!"

II. Try to put everything to the test of the Last Judgment. What will be thought of it then by God and by yourself—that deal with a man for a horse, or corn, or goods from far or near; that launching out into a new line; that bill you are putting your hand to; that order you are giving for a distant port; that offer you are making for that business? Will it bear the light of God's truth?

III. Be exact in performing all religious exercises, even to the letter. Do not allow them to be curtailed, neither private devotions nor public. Force the things of the

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world into their own time ; shut them up within their own bounds. And while you are at your devotions, try in earnest to distract your thoughts entirely from money, and give them up to your devotions. Do not put off your Communion for any business matter. Make the business submit. Is the business of more consequence than your soul ? You cannot say it is. Then make it give way.

IV. Last, and not least of all, give a certain proportion of all your gains to Almighty God. Then you will both be less anxious to pursue gains for their own sake, or you will have a better end in view than merely making yourself rich. If you have a prosperous harvest, a great run of business, a successful speculation, an escape from losses which others have sustained, an unexpected increase of custom, give your tithe to God ungrudgingly, and to the full, not like Ananias and Sapphira, deceiving yourselves, but like Zacheus ; and while you will be none the poorer for it in your estate, your soul will be thereby rescued from the jaws of that devouring monster, “the love of money.”

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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## THE WILDERNESS.

### PART I. GOD PROVING HIS PEOPLE.

THERE is one most solemn parable of human life in its relation to God given us in the Old Testament. But this parable is a history, a history of the most interesting and striking character. It is the history of the passage of the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land. The abiding purpose of this record is to shadow forth to us in vivid images great truths concerning the kingdom of heaven. But these images are produced by strange and wonderful events. Whether in the way of trial or support, "all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition \*."

\* 1 Cor. x. 11.

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The supernatural condition of God's people, their consequent responsibility, the probation through which they pass, and the support provided for them during that probation, the relation also of God's people to Christ and their consequent obligations,—these are the truths which this history sets forth.

Moses cannot be understood without Christ, for he wrote of Christ<sup>b</sup>. His record of the wilderness in particular cannot give up its true meaning till the Gospel light illumines it. Men find at times numerous difficulties in it, because they do not consider its purpose. They object, perhaps, to the manifold miracles which it relates because they will not consider it as *intended* to set forth the supernatural condition of God's Church and people in the world. Yet this is the very purpose of the history. In this light Christ, in this light St. Paul viewed it. Miracles may well reign in it, for its intention is to shew that the world is in God's hand, and that God's people while in the world are not of the world, and that God's providence

<sup>b</sup> St. John v. 46.

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is always around them whether proving or supporting, judging or delivering, punishing or saving in a way and with a directness of which the world never dreams.

Because men forget this fact they imagine the record to be legendary or fabulous. They make its miraculous nature an argument against it, whereas in the Scripture view it is the very evidence for it. And Scripture is consistent with itself. The narrative in the Old Testament is given as miraculous and supernatural; and as such it is applied in the New Testament. This is plainly the theory of Holy Scripture, and on this theory all is consistent, harmonious, and in the true sense natural.

It is with the written Word as with the living and incarnate Word on Tabor. The Gospel sheds its lustre back on the Old Testament, and it is transfigured. Its face doth shine as the sun, and its raiment is white as the light. In the transfiguration on the Mount it was still Jesus, the same human body without form or comeliness, the same poor workday vesture not even worth dividing; but the Divine Nature, the

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inner Godhead revealed itself in the outburst of "the excellent glory" from that body and raiment.

Thus to St. Paul, and to all endowed with spiritual discernment, this fragmentary record of the Pentateuch beams out into celestial and abiding truths. There is the simple and plain history. It is the record of events which actually occurred. But in the Gospel light it is transfigured. The kingdom of God is there, and the earthly, the carnal, and temporal passes into the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal. What God in Christ is to His people, and what God's people are to God in Christ, these mutual relations in their varying aspects are the substance of these shadows, the realities of these figures, the antitypes of these types. What wonder then if much of the narrative is supernatural! The wonder would be if it were not supernatural. Observe how the Apostle speaks:—"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto

• 2 St. Pet. i. 17.

### GOD PROVING HIS PEOPLE.

Moses in the cloud and in the sea ; and did all eat the same spiritual meat ; and did all drink the same spiritual drink : for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them : and that rock was Christ<sup>a</sup>.” He evidently speaks of their condition as altogether supernatural, and, being such, he distinctly regards it and treats it as a lasting and continuous parable intended for all time, but especially “for us on whom the ends of the world are come.”

Furthermore, he implies that it was (as Moses represents it<sup>b</sup>) a state of probation and trial in which very many failed. “With many of them God was not well-pleased : for they were overthrown in the wilderness.” And again, as he elsewhere says, they could not enter in “because of unbelief<sup>c</sup>.” Observe, therefore, 1st, the “sacrament of responsibility” was given them. For baptism is the “sacrament of responsibility,” and this baptism was the portion of all the people. They were all sheltered under the cloud ; they all passed through

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. x. 1—4.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. viii. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. iii. 19.

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the sea; they were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They had also, 2ndly, the sacrament of support, i. e. they were all furnished with food—actual material food, and yet it was of a supernatural character, spiritual meat and spiritual drink—angels' food. But it was given them in earthly and visible channels, and therefore of a sacramental character. He even declares that the Rock which followed them was Christ; not God only, but Christ, i.e. as Immanuel, God with us. Here is most evidently a supernatural condition, and this was itself a great and searching probation. Let us examine some of the details of this trial.

The Israelites had been a nation of slaves. They were to be changed into a nation of warriors and conquerors, the triumphant witnesses of the Lord Jehovah. The first step was to free them. This was God's work. Their liberty was wrought out by a series of miracles. When the Egyptians pursued after them to drag them back into bondage, the supernatural cloud interposed. This was the symbol of God's Holy Spirit,

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in whom the Word of God is ever present. It was the Shechinah of glory afterwards shadowing the mercy-seat<sup>h</sup>. It covered the fugitives at once with God's protection. The passage of the Red Sea follows, and that passage was a baptism. The blood of the paschal lamb had before saved them from the destroyer, and the full meaning and effect of the Passover was now seen. With the blood, the cloud and the water, the heavenly power and the earthly element, combined to accomplish their deliverance.

Thus Israel was taken and separated from all the nations of mankind. He was now alone with his God. The earthly element, the water, has finished its work. It has ensured Israel's freedom by destroying his pursuers. But the cloud, the heavenly element, remains. It accompanies God's pilgrims; it is still their protection, their light, and their guide.

But the wilderness is before them, and the promised land, that goodly land "flowing with milk and honey," "the glory of all lands," is beyond the wilderness. The

<sup>h</sup> See Philo for the Jewish tradition to this effect.

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wilderness must be traversed before they can reach it. They are alone with their God, and He is enough for them; but the moment that they forget God they are alone with themselves: and what are they in themselves? A Syrian ready to perish was their father<sup>1</sup>, and they are certainly his progeny—a feeble race, ready to perish. They have been a nation of slaves, and slavery has left its mark on their hearts. The aching and weakness of their bonds remain although the bonds are now broken. The cowardice of the slave is in their spirit, although they are now free men. Their eyes are dim with the long darkness of the house of bondage. The iron has entered into their soul.

God indeed has taken them up as on eagle wings<sup>2</sup> and brought them to Himself. He has gathered them up into His own freedom, His heavenly life, a supernatural blessedness. But the very exaltation is a trial. They grow dizzy in such a flight; they stretch back their hands toward the earth. What is freedom to those whose hearts are in the flesh-pots of Egypt?

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxvi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xix. 4.

## GOD PROVING HIS PEOPLE.

But God changes not, “therefore ye children of Israel are not consumed<sup>1</sup>.” He has fitting nourishment for this soaring flight—angels’ food. Manna dropping out of heaven like dew, birds wafted on the winds of heaven, water gushing miraculously from the rock, not given by human power, (as even Moses once thought,) but given out of heaven, from Christ Himself their Head and King,—these are their nourishment.

Thus supernaturally provided, (their very garments and shoes not waxing old,) the Israelites are brought on their journey. Amalek is overthrown by the way when he would rob them of their fountain<sup>m</sup>, and he is vanquished by the lifting and upstaying of Moses’ hands, by the power of intercession and the might of God, that they may see how He can strengthen them against their adversaries; and thus they are carried to Sinai.

Here, indeed, they are alone with God. The wilderness is around them; the barren mountains are before them; the rocky glens

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iii. 6.

<sup>m</sup> Blunt’s “Scripture Coincidences,” i. 16.

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environ them ; the giant peaks tower into the sky above them. The camp rests. Israel sanctifies himself. He “prepares to meet his God<sup>n</sup>.” His responsibility is to be filled up to the full. As Confirmation is the complement of Baptism, as then God’s people taking on themselves the baptismal covenant with their own voice and choice assume to themselves their full responsibility ; so then God’s ancient Israel was to hear God’s fiery law, and listen to God’s own voice speaking audibly in his ears, proclaiming His everlasting commandments, and was to assent with his own voice and choice to that holy law, and yield himself up to those life-giving commandments. “This do,” said God, “and thou shalt live<sup>o</sup>;” and Israel answered, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do<sup>p</sup>.” Thus he became wholly and consciously responsible to his God. If he breaks that agreement, must he not pass under the rod and be brought under the bond of the covenant<sup>q</sup>?

One addition to their trial completes it

<sup>n</sup> Amos iv. 12.

<sup>o</sup> See Rom. x. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. xix. 8.

<sup>q</sup> Ezek. xx. 37.

### GOD PROVING HIS PEOPLE.

for the time—the withdrawal of Moses into the Mount. Israel must not rely on man, not even on Moses, not on any visible support; only on the invisible Creator, the God of their fathers, of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the eternal God their refuge, the everlasting Jehovah.

Then comes the Israelites' first great fall. With the sound of the commandments still echoing in their ears, with their professions of obedience scarcely silent upon their lips, they offend at once and directly against the very head and sum of the Law. They require some visible, tangible object of adoration, some earthly and carnal image for their stay. The superstitions of Egypt are fresh in their remembrance. They are yet too slavish for faith. "Make us gods, which shall go before us; as for this man Moses, which brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Then follows the mad joy and revel of sin, of the heart shaking off the true faith and fear of God, and turning to the things of earth for support and solace, and to its wild pleasures to drown the voice of conscience.

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"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."<sup>1</sup> But they are under the covenant. They chose it for their portion, and its rod begins to be felt, and its bond closes upon them ; there is wrath, but there is mercy also. Some have thought that the relation between God and His people was thenceforth in a measure altered or qualified, and that the rest of the Law, the Levitical and ceremonial observances, "statutes" that in comparison "were not good," were now added to the obligations of the people. The tabernacle is moved out of the camp. The angel of the Lord is promised instead of His more immediate Presence, as if the people were put at a greater distance from their God. Still, at the intercession of Moses, they are spared. God's protection is not withdrawn. Their blessings are restored to them. In token that God is still theirs, the Shechinah covers the tabernacle. The miracles which nourish them still follow them. God chastens and corrects them, but does not give them over unto death. He mingles judgments in their portion, and

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxii. 6.

• Ezek. xx. 25.

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He turns His judgments into mercies. He gives them the priesthood out of the executioners of His wrath. He slays Aaron's two sons to shew them the holiness of His service. He sends the great burning of Taberah to win them from their lust after the fleshpots of Egypt. He even strikes Miriam with the leprosy when she and Aaron rise up against Moses.

Thus, even after their offence at Sinai, God still leads them, and guards them, and guides them with the fiery pillar. He moves and pitches their camp. He feeds them with the manna and the quails, and the water from the rock. Their very raiment is still His care. They have become numerous in their bondage as the stars of heaven ; yet He watches over them all. In their fourfold order, with the banners of their tribes displayed, under their captains of thousands, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens, to the sound of the silver trumpets, and with prayer ascending from the myriad voices at every raising and pitching of their tents, led by Moses and Aaron and the inspired seventy, the Israelites move

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on as the army of the Lord of Hosts, sustained, commanded, fed, and led by Him to the very border of the promised land.

They are a people taken up out of the world, and borne and carried by the Lord Himself. The waste howling wilderness, the dry sand, the flinty rock, are no more obstacles to them than the yielding air to the flying bird. Their passage is not as of the earth, earthly ; but as of angels, heavenly.

What encouragement is thus given for their faith, what a discipline for their obedience, what a preparation for their next trial ! “Fear not,” God seemed to say again, “for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces that ye sin not.” Surely they are now trained to execute their commission, to be a nation of valiant warriors and conquerors, to accomplish God’s judgment on the Amorites, to take possession of the promised land.

It is exactly here that their faith fails. The crowning mercy is a crowning trial. It is always so. God had chosen them to be kings and priests to Himself. Their

<sup>•</sup> Exod. xx. 20.

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priestly kingdom is before them. Their inheritance awaits them. It has been promised them by God. He has confirmed the gift with an oath. He is at their head, ready to give it into their possession. Their spies have examined it; they have brought its fruits; they have searched it thoroughly; for forty days they have passed throughout it. Ought not the Israelites to believe God for all the signs which He has shewed among them? Have they not seen His glory, the miracles which He did in Egypt and the wilderness? Have they not had experience of His power, and assurance of His love? In the urgent exhortation to take immediate possession of Canaan, they have reached the point at which they must either fulfil or for the time frustrate the very purpose of their election and wonderful preservation.

A murmur is rising from the camp, but it is not the murmur of joy, nor the sound of warriors encouraging one another for the conflict. There is a sound of lamentation and weeping, a murmur of angry sorrow and bitter despair:—"Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would

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God that we had died in the wilderness !  
Let us make us a captain, and let us return  
to Egypt <sup>u</sup>."

The people cluster round their messengers. Two are encouraging their brethren, the other ten are rehearsing their wild accounts of cities strong and walled up to heaven, of fierce warriors, strong giants, and their apprehensions of overthrow, massacre, captivity. Man or God, to which shall they hearken, which shall they believe ?

What is the first law of spiritual success ? That dependence on God which makes men in all circumstances do the will of God with their whole heart fervently. God had so ordered all His dealings with them as to create and confirm this dependence. It fails now in the hour of trial. They hearken to man more than to God, rather they listen to their own treacherous hearts. Does the molten calf, that young sin of theirs <sup>x</sup>, now steal from them their courage, and lie heavy upon their soul ? Is Satan permitted to

<sup>u</sup> Numb. xiv. 2, 4.

<sup>x</sup> The Rabbis said, in every after sin of the Jews there was an ounce of the golden calf.

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appal them by it, and to stir up with the memory of it their weakness and slavish cowardice? He is ever most busy in the crowning hour of mercy; he knows that his time is short, so his rage is great. Therefore is that hour, as we said, the hour of crowning trial. Then he "desires to have us that he may sift us as wheat," and for the time he prevails against the Israelites. They refuse to advance. They turn against Joshua and Caleb, against Moses, against God.

And the sentence comes. God's purpose indeed shall not be baffled. Their little ones, who, they say, shall be a prey, these shall be brought into Canaan. These shall enter into the inheritance. God will fulfil His promise without fail. "But as for you, your carcases shall fall in the wilderness."<sup>1</sup> "Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it."<sup>2</sup> "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Is it not "written for our admonition?"

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xxii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xiv. 32.

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Does not this history cry to us aloud, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God<sup>a</sup>? ” Israel now begins to reap the fruit of his transgression. The false spies, the tempters, die ; the plague smites them. The two faithful messengers live. ‘Why did we not credit them ? Is it too late. Let us go up now.’

It is *too late*. They must “know God’s breach of promise.” They must learn that God’s promise is conditional on man’s faith —that God accomplishes His word indeed, but in His own time ; that if men break the conditions expressed or implied, God breaks the promise for the transgressors.

They will not, however, believe this. Here also their faith fails. They *will* go up now —they will not turn back. It is too late. They go up, but the Lord is not with them—therefore their enemies chase them like bees. Their battle is but Hormah, that is, destruction.

They *must* turn back. But God is still gracious. He accepts the intercession of

<sup>a</sup> Heb. iii. 12.

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Moses. He does not destroy them utterly. He will be with them still. He will still support and guide them. The cloud shall still lead them, the manna still feed them, the water still gush from the rock to give them drink. But many an old reviving lust, and many a new form of rebellion and unbelief shall need God's correction, and bring down His chastisements, and the forty years' probation must be lived out—a year for a day. For forty years God must plead with them in the wilderness face to face. In "the great and terrible wilderness, where are serpents and scorpions and drought," amid the dying forms of their rebellious parents, the "little ones" must grow up as in a school of discipline, who in their stead are to obtain the fulfilment of God's promises, and to take possession of the kingdom.

We must glance very briefly at the details of this second probation.

First, with that fearful inconsistency which is so frequent after sin in our fallen nature, the Israelites bring the results of their own transgression as an accusation against those

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true friends and guides who sought at all risks to save them from that transgression. Subtle tempters forthwith rise up, addressing themselves to the feelings of pride so natural in the human heart after sin, and arguing from the very promises and mercies of God, against the interpreters of His will and the order of His Providence.

The representatives of Reuben the natural first-born of their forefather Jacob, and one from among the sacred Levites with a troop of followers—princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown—rise up against Moses and Aaron. Observe their pleas. First comes Korah with his company, and as is natural for men with their sacred office when turned into demagogues, their accusation is that of envy marked by a spurious liberality. God had told the Israelites by Moses that they were “His peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation<sup>b</sup>.” What need then of any special interpreters of God’s will, what need of any other priesthood, seeing “all the congregation are holy?”

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xix. 6.

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The Reubenites have another argument—natural to them as princes, and men of fame and authority. They pretend that the Israelites have been deceived by Moses, through motives of personal ambition. They appeal to common sense, to present experience, which, they declare, falsifies his promises. “Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up . . . to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?” Are we not, that is, to use our reason, our common sense? Have we not as much understanding as you? Do we not actually discern the falsehood of your promises, which you would persuade us were God’s? Are not these sufferings and trials your fault? They speak as if compassionating the people for whom Moses had no pity—for whom he had just prayed, to be blotted out of the book of life, and whom he only had saved by his intercession. Then comes the avenging

• Numb. xvi. 13, 14.

## THE WILDERNESS.

fire out of heaven to consume the false claimants of the heavenly prerogatives ; and the earth opens to engulf the ambitious pretenders to the earthly authority and dignity which God had concentrated in Moses and Aaron.

The freedom which God gives is the freedom of order, and wisdom, and peace. It receives and rejoices in the priesthood, and the princedom which God provides. The Lord's freeman indeed recognises that priesthood and kingship which each man has, namely, of offering his spiritual sacrifice of obedience and faith, of ruling his own heart and soul according to God's word. But he also recognises the constitution of religious government which God has instituted, and owns the lawful government which God has ordained.

But to Israel in his bitter disappointment, as he sees himself shut out by his own act of unbelief from Canaan, the manifest judgments of God become new provocations. The people should be bitter against themselves. They are bitter instead against their truest friends. “ Ye have slain the Lord’s

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people." See the strange blindness and perversity of unbelief! Then come other chastisements to instruct them. The dreadful plague follows in which Aaron must stand between the dead and living, Aaron with his incense sent by Moses to be their only saviour. His rod must bud to confirm the priesthood in his house.

At length they yield to the overmastering but gracious hand of God; they consent, though with reluctance, to their penitential wanderings.

But the old temptations and provocations return. "There is no bread, neither is there any water." And the plague and the fiery serpents must do their work. The evil heart of unbelief must be disciplined out of them. The long journey, the weary wanderings, the fainting of the heart through the length of the way, all these must train and purify and cleanse them. Aaron must be taken from them. Moses himself must die before they can enter fully into their inheritance. His work is done. He has prepared his people and Joshua their captain to fulfil the Lord's purpose. He has trained them to be a na-

## THE WILDERNESS, &c.

tion of warriors and conquerors. He has cured them of their slavery. He has fitted them to pass the Jordan, to enter into the goodly land, the houses which they builded not, the vineyards and the oliveyards which they planted not. So he can sing his song of triumph, and utter his prophetic hymn before he leaves them. And he can go up into the Mount with his God, and die and be buried, sepulchred by God Himself. For the conquest and destiny of Israel have opened out before him, and their pæan is his death-song. Not till then was his eye dim, or his natural force abated. He also was supernaturally preserved by God, until his work among his people was fully done, until he had carried and supported them to the end, until they had been tried in the fire, and were no longer found wanting.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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### THE WILDERNESS.

#### PART II. GOD SUSTAINING HIS PEOPLE.

THE nature of freedom is often misunderstood. It is not unfrequently described as simply the power to choose between good and evil. This power is indeed necessary for freedom, but it is not freedom. Freedom is the power always to hate and reject all evil, and always to love and choose all good. But there is none good but One, that is, God. When any creature's will becomes identical with God's will, when any creature of God loathes and rejects all evil and loves and chooses all good as God does, then and not till then is he free, perfectly free. Then his freedom becomes a necessity of his nature, not imposed by external constraint, but an inward and free necessity, a neces-

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sity of love. This is the glorious liberty of the children of God—a liberty like that of God Himself; and thus in the Apostle's great words they become “partakers of the Divine nature<sup>a</sup>. ” They rest in God, as God rests in Himself, and His service is perfect freedom<sup>b</sup>. This also is Christ's peace which He leaves and gives—eternal peace. It is the kingdom of heaven in its fulness, “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost<sup>c</sup>. ”

But to attain this peace God's creatures must pass through a state of probation or trial. The possession of the power to choose implies the universal need of such probation. The duration of the trial is of no moment—one day or a thousand years, a thousand years or one day; but it must be real and absolute while it lasts, and it must be such as to determine the direction of the will for ever.

For success in this trial two conditions are plainly necessary. 1st, Entire dependence on God, who is the only good; and 2ndly, a willing surrender of the heart to

<sup>a</sup> 2 St. Pet. i. 4.      <sup>b</sup> Collect for Easter Sunday.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xix. 7.

## GOD SUSTAINING HIS PEOPLE.

such entire dependence. These two conditions are perfectly fulfilled in the elect angels,—“they excel in strength, fulfilling His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word<sup>d</sup>. ” Their probation is over. We see the perfect fulfilment of these two conditions in Christ when manifest in the flesh. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And this exposure to trial was God’s doing, not self-sought. He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The cup which He drank at the last was the Father’s giving. He would not touch man’s cup of anodyne lest He should miss one pang of the trial which the Father had appointed, and the perfecting of His human and created nature is ascribed to His trial and obedience in it. There is also the entire dependence upon God. “I speak not,” He says, “of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.” And to His obedience, His coronation and enthronement are attributed in Scripture<sup>e</sup>.

But equality with angels, and Christ’s

<sup>d</sup> Ps. ciii. 20.

• See Rev. iii. 21.

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own throne, are promised also to us if we are made perfect. For us therefore is ordained the same exposure to temptation, and for us is provided the same support under temptation. For man's fall is met by Christ's incarnation. The word of God was broken by flesh, and the Word was made flesh that the breach might be repaired. Hence our faith is not only in God, but in Christ—in God made man. Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. Hence also He is not only their support in the spirit, but His flesh also is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed. Furthermore, we must be taken up and engrafted into Christ, that we may be fully tried and perfected, and abide in Him for ever. Thus our whole condition as Christians is mystical or sacramental, in the world, but not of the world; joined to Christ by His flesh and blood, yet one spirit with Him. "They twain shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and His Church." Moreover, Christ Himself instituted two Sacraments, in which the earthly and heavenly,

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the created and uncreated, the material and spiritual are knit and joined together, and in which the earthly, created, and material pass sacramentally into the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal, even as the flesh and blood, body and soul of Christ become divine by their assumption into His Godhead. And these two Sacraments<sup>1</sup> are the extension of the incarnation to us, both as probation and support, both in its working and in its perfecting power. These two Sacraments consequently are the Sacrament of responsibility and the Sacrament of nourishment.

Now men often take a different view of God's object in revelation from God's own view. The world would persuade us that the Gospel is intended to educate mankind, to diffuse civilization and philanthropy, to make life sweeter, to improve morals, to enlighten nations as to their temporal interests, to disseminate liberty, to multiply luxuries, to make earth a kind of paradise of comfort.

Doubtless these temporal advantages follow to some extent on Christianity and the

<sup>1</sup> See Hooker, v. 56.

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Gospel<sup>s</sup>. But if we fix our eyes on them as the chief end and purpose of God, a dangerous illusion will follow. There will arise a specious worldliness, and soft easy selfishness, calling themselves perhaps Christian charity and liberty. The advocates of such ideas will honour Christ in name, but reject Him in power; praise the example of His cross, but laugh at its atoning efficacy; own Him, perhaps as one, perhaps even as the first<sup>h</sup>, amidst kind and wise and good men, but deny or ridicule the idea of His Godhead, the mystery of His Incarnation, the facts of His Resurrection and Ascension, the prophecy of His return for judgment.

Thus an active principle of unbelief is generated, undermining that faith "which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen<sup>i</sup>," calling up that spirit of scoffing which the prophetic ear of the Apostle heard crying out in the

<sup>s</sup> This is questioned by many; by Mr. Buckle, for example, who looks on the Gospel as an obstacle to prosperity.

<sup>h</sup> Theodore Parker, Ernest Rénan.

<sup>i</sup> Heb. xi. 1.

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ast days, "Where is the promise of His coming?" God tells us that His purpose is to prepare Himself a people, a special and peculiar people, ready for that coming. They are indeed the "great multitude which no man can number<sup>k</sup>," but gathered *out* of all nations, and languages, and tongues, chosen as His elect out of all the ages and generations of mankind. God is no respecter of persons, "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him<sup>l</sup>;" and therefore His people must be gathered one by one, and each who is called by Him must be proved and tried, as silver and gold are tried in the fire, and each who will accept and use His support will be strengthened, and purified, and perfected by Him, and so be made meet to be "a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." Together the saved are one house, family, body, spirit.

But each individually passes, and must pass, through that trial of his faith "which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth<sup>m</sup>," and each individually needs

<sup>k</sup> Rev. vii. 9.   <sup>l</sup> Acts x. 35.   <sup>m</sup> 1 St. Pet. i. 7.

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and must use that supernatural support, if he would pass safely through the fire which must try all things; and every gift of God has its proper obligation on those to whom it is given. It becomes of necessity an additional probation. For it can be either used, or misused; since if it is neglected it is misused as much as if it was actually *abused*.

These are the great and universal truths which St. Paul saw represented in a living history, by the passage through the wilderness.

The Paschal Lamb has been offered for us: His blood, the blood of the everlasting covenant, has been marked on the lintel and door-post of His Church, and has entitled all its people to His holy Baptism.

Then each Christian man is taken up out of the world into a supernatural condition, receives a new birth, and is set in a new relation to God. He is engrafted into Christ as a branch into the Vine, incorporated into Him as a limb into the Body<sup>n</sup>.

We are thus one by one brought out of

<sup>n</sup> See Hooker, v. 56.

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the bondage and dominion of sin. Freedom, the liberty of God's children, is conferred upon us. A passage is made for us, and the earthly element and the heavenly gift, like the sea and the cloud, are joined in one baptism, the Sacrament of our deliverance. But it is also the Sacrament of responsibility. Life is before us, the life of this world; it lies between us and the heavenly Canaan which is promised. We must pass through it in our way to eternal life, which is the fulfilment of God's promise.

We are joined to Christ; taken up out of the world, while yet we are in the world; caught up by God's grace, as on eagle wings, into a supernatural life, the life of faith, while yet the life of this world, our natural life, is around us and within us. Can we consent to this supernatural life, and yield ourselves up to the grace of God? Can we be gladly pilgrims and sojourners, passing on to a promised home, looking forward to a rest and inheritance in the world to come, and thus living in the future, and seeking first that future and its righteousness?

Furthermore, though freed, the marks and

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wounds of the fetters, the feebleness and weakness produced by our imprisonment, still remain impressed upon our souls.

In that supernatural life, the life of grace, which we are called to live, we are each of us individually in reality set apart from earth. Each of us in the depth of his existence is alone with his God. Here again the probation becomes more intense, and is brought closer home, even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.

To those whose home is in heaven, life must of necessity be in some sense a wilderness. "Vanity of vanities," saith the Preacher, "all is vanity." Take the noblest earthly life; give the mind the highest business of the world, let it devote to it the greatest energies, the purest purposes,—"What shadows we are," said Burke, toward the end of his career, "and what shadows we pursue!" Such is the necessary conclusion, where God is not the object, for there is none good but one, that is, God. Even Christ would not be called good by any who saw not and sought not God in Him. His flesh and blood are

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not the end—they are the way. His human nature is the door to His Divine. It is to reach the Father that we enter into Him, and unless we find the Father in Him, we miss the purpose of His Incarnation.

Can we bear to be alone with God? Does the wilderness shut us in, part us from the nations round about, separate us from the unthinking world? This is what life must do in its Christian reality. It must be thus with those who are created in God's image. I do not mean that the young, or the penitent, on entering the way of life, fully comprehend or distinctly grasp this truth. Nevertheless it is the truth, and those who love the truth, discern it, and perceive its overpowering character. It is that principle which makes them serious, earnest, resolute; it is that principle which sets them in all diligence to make their calling and election sure; it is this consciousness which fills them with thoughts too great for speech, yearnings too deep to be fully understood; this brings out of their hearts the groanings which cannot be uttered; this makes them shrink from all

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falsehood and self-deceit, from all foulness and impurity, from all vanity and foolishness, from everything which in any way disagrees with their full communion with their God, their glad but awful apprehension of His presence.

Nevertheless there is in us all a weakness and frailty which shrinks from and is appalled by such communion, even while the better mind longs and yearns for its fulness. And God condescends to our feebleness. He offers the sacramental tokens and communications of His presence. Creation in its beauty and order is a sacrament of His presence, a shadow of His eternal power and Godhead. Mankind, man's history without us, and man's nature within us, in all its fearful and wonderful constitution, are a sacrament of His presence, a dim reflection of His glory, a cloud-wreathed mirror in which His countenance and attributes appear half-revealed, half-concealed, now pavilioned in dark waters and judgments, now illuminating heaven and earth with the sunbeams of goodness and rainbows of mercy and love.

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But in another and far higher way the Church is a sacrament of God's presence, for the Church sets forth before us the crowning mystery or sacrament of the incarnation—of God manifest in the flesh, of the Word made and dwelling amongst us. In the Scripture, in the ministry, in holy Sacraments there is an embodiment in earthly things of heavenly and spiritual and eternal realities conveyed to us by them, and bestowed upon us through them. These are the antitypes of the Shechinah, the manna, the water from the rock. They lead like the fiery pillar, they feed like the manna, they refresh like the gushing stream, the people of God in their passage through the wilderness of earth.

Then comes the Sinai of life; the day when the law of God is brought home to the heart, when God reveals the meaning of His covenant, the extent of our responsibility as His redeemed and ransomed people, when the awakening trumpet of conscience waxes louder and louder, when He calls upon us as on Israel to declare freely and fully in word and in life,—

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“All that the Lord hath said unto us we will do.”

This is the truth which the Church sets before her children in Confirmation. Not, indeed, under the shadow of Sinai, amidst blackness and darkness and tempest, thunderings and lightnings and voices; rather under the shadow of the heavenly Jerusalem and the true Mount Zion, amidst the light and splendour of the eternal promises, while the innumerable company of angels, and the saints in glory, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and God the Judge of all, are watching from the everlasting bulwarks, do we profess our solemn obligation, while the blood of Jesus speaks sweetly and softly of mercy to be obtained and grace found in time of need<sup>o</sup>.

But too often at these times the Saviour seems to us absent. His visible presence is in heaven, and we appear left to ourselves. If we could only be with Him, or if He were only seen at our side, then we could resist temptation. So we think, and then we begin to doubt and hesitate, and soon

<sup>o</sup> See Heb. xii. 22.

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the world or the flesh sets before us our need of some present, and visible, and tangible object of our affection, and the old power of evil within us begins to move and stir. Some fond idolatry is demanded by the law of sin which is in our members ; we cannot (we imagine) do without it, we must have it ; "What profit shall this birthright do to me?" How often also are the young here led astray ! How often do they require in some form or other the golden idol, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life !

Then come the dance, and song, and revel ; the mad whirl of pleasure in which the heart seeks to stifle its conscience, and dissipate its thoughts, and hide its fall, and conceal itself from the face and voice of God, to be followed by the rebuke, the warning, the chastisement, and before early sins have developed themselves into actual deadly transgressions, or at least before they have become presumptuous sins, sins of premeditation, we set forth again on our journey through the wilderness. Then ensues another trial. God has provided spiritual food, and spir-

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tual guidance. But there is always a mixed multitude come up out of Egypt with God's true people. There are the ignoble spirits whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things, who continue to "fall a lusting." And this weakness and concupiscence are terribly infectious. They would by word and by example persuade God's people that the manna and the water, the heavenly nourishment and refreshment provided in God's Church, are poor and wearisome, and a burden to the flesh. "Our soul loatheth this light food." There is, no doubt, a great trial in the apparent sameness of God's service. It is angels' food "to do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word." It is full of blessedness. But the blessedness is not so manifest perhaps at the first, the fulfilment of the promises is beyond the wilderness, in the after-life upon earth, its quiet and heavenly peace, and still more in the eternal world to come. Angels' food is for angel lips, and therefore for those upon earth who would be as the angels.

Still God's people move on. The army of the Lord is in its heavenly order; the

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silver trumpets of His Gospel are sounding ; the Incarnate Son, as the cloudy pillar, is guiding by His Church and by His Spirit. There is the form and order of God's people. Their standards are displaying the Cross as they wave over the march. "The graves of them that lusted" <sup>p</sup> are left far behind. Kadesh is reached. Behold the promised land, the kingdom of heaven, victory over temptation, the peace which passes understanding, the joy which none can take away ; good things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Now for the most part comes the great trial of life. Blessed are the little ones, those who have the simplicity and the innocence and the faith, typified under the childlike character, in that day. "Are ye able?" will be Christ's question. "We are able," their reply. They will not tremble at the frown or scoff of the world, at the strength and cunning of their adversaries, at the mighty strongholds of Satan walled

<sup>p</sup> Kibroth-Hattaavah.

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up to heaven. They will give no heed to the discouragements and deficiencies of the feeble and irresolute world around them, to the opposition or the fears of those nearest and dearest to them, of father or mother, brother or sister, wife or child.

Their way is before them, and the Lord is with them. They are already trained, and disciplined, and exercised. In a short time they have accomplished a long time. They know the might and power of the heavenly food, the bread of life, the water from the rock ; they have become, or they become communicants ; they devote themselves, as if naturally, as if of necessity, to the work and service of God, whatsoever their earthly vocation may be ; they know Him whom they have believed ; they know that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed ; they believe in His presence and union with them, and they are convinced that they can do all things through His indwelling and strengthening life. In His flesh and blood the way into the holiest is open before them, and they cannot but press in ; with bowed heads indeed and contrite

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hearts, and reverence, and godly fear, but still in burning zeal, in calm unflinching resolution, and in deep joy.

They know that they will need the panoply of God ; that a warfare is before them, snares and fiery weapons, and the armies of the enemy. But they know also, for they have tried, the goodness of the armour of God, and the might also of that arm which hath smitten “ Rahab <sup>a</sup> and wounded the dragon ;” that mightier is He that is in them, than he that is in the world.

They know that the sun shall stand still in heaven, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, rather than that they should fail in the completeness of their victory. “ The love of Christ constraineth ” them ; how can they fail ?

Alas ! how many at this hour of trial delay or hang back, or turn aside, or even return upon their own footsteps. They hearken to the murmur of the cowards in the camp, to the thoughtless, or backsliding multitude. We are not good enough ; we are not fit ; we are not fully able. Thus cry joins cry, and

<sup>a</sup> i.e. Egypt—Isa. li. 9.

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complaint complaint, and the cowardice is infectious. It spreads from heart to heart, from rank to rank ; they all with one consent begin to make excuse. Is it that some youthful sin is heavy on the conscience, that some secret pollution mars the preparation of God ; or is there some vanity and pride which will not submit to the rule of God, or some intellectual presumption which will not submit to the Sacraments of God—which would have some other God than God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ?

Whatsoever the remoter cause may be, there is too often this fatal cowardice to be found in the hearts of God's people ; and too often in the moment when they should advance to certain victory, they turn back to fall in the wilderness, to wander amidst new trials, to sink under new temptations, to waste away or be engulfed suddenly, to die in their sins, or to be saved as by fire.

For, blessed be God ! even when His people turn back, He does not forsake them, His gifts and calling are without repentance. *He does not change, therefore His people*

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are not consumed. When they having changed from Him, change back to Him again, they find Him unchanged and unchangeable—loving them with an everlasting love, Jesus the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Theirs are still the cloudy pillar, the manna, and the rock, and these will continue with them all that long way through the wilderness, the way of repentance. Their probation and their support are alike renewed. But forty years are appointed them, a year for a day. This “forty” represents the complete time of trial. It is the measure of temptation allowed and allotted by God, and the multiplication of the interval, a year for a day, shews further how temptations and trials are multiplied by acts of unbelief and sin. He who will not advance at God’s time to a devout and earnest life, to a full possession of the kingdom of heaven, and perhaps still more, he who falls from grace given, and dishonours his calling and election by some fearful inconsistency, must toil and labour wearily, must see the promised land of peace and joy receding

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continually when he thinks to reach it, must see (like David after his great fall<sup>1</sup>) the sin which he has committed strew judgments and afflictions in his path, even when it is forgiven and blotted out, and must learn amid the drought, and the fiery serpents, and the renewed hunger and thirst, that discipline of trial by which he may be at last prepared and strengthened to take full possession of the promised inheritance.

Here then follow, sometimes in a long and continual stream, sometimes with tremendous repetition, sometimes with a strange and baffling interchange, the trials symbolised by the history of the wilderness, after Israel's sentence.

The trials may be summed up under three heads ; the trials of the body, the trials of the soul, the trials of the spirit. But first of all there is the great trial of the necessity of repentance. It is needful to accept the consequences of transgression, to acquiesce in the blessed laws of God's most holy kingdom. This seems especially the excellence of David's repentance ; while he felt, through

<sup>1</sup> See Blunt's "Scriptural Coincidences," ii. 10.

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heart and soul, the pangs of the evils which seemed to spring out as if naturally from his sin, he yet acquiesces in them, and bows his head unmurmuring and submissive.

Neither must the penitent be ignorant of his fall. He must not be unaware of its natural consequences. He must see how he has sown temptations in his flesh, disturbed the order and course of the affections of his soul, entangled himself in intellectual difficulties and spiritual contradictions, and perhaps given occasion to accusations and blasphemies which he cannot repel as he should. He must never forget that these sad consequences spring as necessarily out of sin as plants and fruits of poison out of roots of bitterness.

He must also acquiesce in these consequences, bear them meekly, and deal with them wisely, using them always to the sanctification of his heart, and the manifestation of his much love—the much love which he owes because he is forgiven much.

We might trace out the consequences of Israel's sin in the particular trials,—the schismatical tabernacle of Korah, the argu-

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ment that we all are holy and in direct communion with God, that no one has a right to denounce or warn others, much less to pass any judgment upon them. The universal priesthood of the Christian (a truth in itself) tempts men in such hours to deny the Christian priesthood, the order and faith of the Church of God, in a word, all external authority. There is the rationalism of Dathan and Abiram, denying the superior blessings of a life of faith. "Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?" The intellect and reason of man would be self-sufficient. Creeds, Scriptures, everything is to be subjected to the alembic of the individual human consciousness. Here come all the temptations so prevalent at present to deny the miraculous power, the superintending providence, the righteous judgments of Almighty God.

Fanatic enthusiasm on the one hand, cold sarcastic self-deifying intellect on the other, assail the mind in its hour of strife, especially in the sore discipline of repentance. And there are ever men famous in the congregation, men of renown, scholars, politicians, poets, philosophers, (called it may be,

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as our Lord says, benefactors,) of good moral life, and excellent gifts of mind to encourage these opinions; and inflame these temptations; and the presumptuous priest and Levite may join in with or put themselves at the head of the rationalistic movement, with words of spurious liberality and specious pretences of moderation and charity. It often needs a view of the deep abyss of infidelity and pantheism, and a flash of the scathing fire of manifest passion and wickedness to which these evil principles lead, to bring the Church back to a sounder and humbler state of mind. Men, like angels, fall into the gulf as it cleaves asunder beneath their feet, or the character of the apparent saint crumbles into the ashes and rottenness of evident sin, that the temptations which they spread around them may be revealed, and that the fictitious glory may be dispelled, and that it may be clear at the last whose cause they serve, who can transform himself into an angel of light<sup>s</sup>, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness.

Or there may come the sense of weariness

• 2 Cor. xi. 14.

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and exhaustion in well-doing, as the penitent must walk by rule, and abound in the work of love, amidst darkness and heaviness of heart and the shadows of past sins, and the hunger and drought of the soul, yearning after consolation and assurance, withheld by God for a season. Then there may be the fiery serpents of remorse and despair darting from time to time their sharp and poisonous teeth into the heart. How often do these lie in wait for the hour of sorrow or alarm, when "without are fightings and within fears," and how often do they then spring unawares upon the spirit, and endeavour to overwhelm it and swallow it in "overmuch sorrow<sup>t</sup>."

But under these and all other trials for the humble and the patient there are still the "sure mercies" of David, the gifts and calling of God which are without repentance. There is the incarnate Saviour, as in the cloudy pillar or lifted up on the cross, in His Word and Church. There He is to guide and lead, to rest and to move, to go before and to return again. He orders all the penitent's

<sup>t</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 7.

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goings, and maketh his way acceptable to Himself. There He is restoring the repentant to all his former privileges, perhaps enlarging and multiplying His gifts, as to St. Peter who had denied Him, and to St. Paul who had persecuted Him. There He is in the manna feeding the repentant with His own flesh, with spiritual and angelic nourishments by His blessed Sacrament, and His continual sacramental presence. There He is as the Rock, the smitten Rock; the eternal and immoveable power of God unto salvation streaming forth from His wounded side, the spirit, the water, and the blood, following and meeting His poor servant in all his toils, and bringing forth the sweetest consolations out of the hardest judgments.

Thus more and more, as he labours on upon his pilgrimage, learning obedience through the things which he suffers, and being like his Master made perfect through suffering, does the penitent grow into a warrior and a conqueror. All things work together for his good, and he too is made ready for the heavenly Canaan. Like Amalek

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and Sihon, and the giant king of Bashan, his mightiest temptations and difficulties are overcome. He has preludes and fore-tastes of the perfect liberty and peace, the complete and everlasting victory which awaits him, when as Christ overcame and is set down with His Father upon His throne, so he shall overcome and sit down with Christ upon His throne. Moses and Aaron will have passed away. The law and the mediatorial kingdom, even these will be over. There will be the unclouded face of God, the fulness of the light of God and of His Lamb. The manna and the water from the rock, all sacraments and mysteries, will become the river of the water of life and the marriage-supper of the Lamb, the perfect and unspeakable union of soul and body through Christ with the eternal and unchanging God.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

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### MOSES—HIS CHARACTER AND DEATH.

IN the former Tracts for this Easter season we have been led to dwell upon the principal features of that era, so momentous both in the world's history and the history of religion, which begins with the Exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. That Exodus and the march through the wilderness which followed was, like all great revolutions, intimately connected with one or two commanding personages, who were themselves in a measure formed by the epoch in which they lived, and who, on the other hand, left their own impress upon their age.

The *one* man around whose name the history of the world at this period converges is *Moses*. Never did a leader conduct to

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an issue a national movement so world-wide in its results, so permanent in its influence. A modern historian has written upon the "decisive battles of the world," selecting those struggles which he conceives more than any other to have affected the destinies of the human race. A volume of at least equal interest might be written upon those national convulsions which have from time to time adjusted and regulated the progress of mankind. In such a volume no critic would hesitate to assign a foremost place to the revolt of Israel against the despotism of the Pharaohs and the migration of the tribes into Palestine. How much of our traditional standard of morals, as well as of the actual usages of modern life, have their germ in the legislation of the desert ! How much of our very language and thought, our imagery and metaphors, have their origin in the events of that period ! What has been said more particularly of the patriarchal age is true also of the Mosaic :—"The figures which we employ in prose and poetry, in allegory and sermon, are the bequest of that age. In the sight of that time the

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symbols and realities which we now regard as separate from each other were blended into one. The curtain of the picture of life was to them the picture itself.”

Of this age *Moses* was the soul. But for him, humanly speaking, the Israelites might have become permanently the Helots of Egypt. We say this advisedly, in order to bring out more clearly the fact that the Bible history has a natural and supernatural side. And whilst we may not attempt to reduce the marvels which are recorded in the sacred page within the limits of common events, neither, on the other hand, may we forget that to contemporaries the chain of circumstances, of which those marvels are constituent parts, would often wear no extraordinary aspect. The men seemed to them common men, acting upon common motives. We cannot tell how Pharaoh blinded himself to the Divine mission of Moses, but we hardly doubt that to himself he appeared to be only notwithstanding the encroachments of a revolting horde of settlers in his kingdom; that to him Moses would be but a leader

\* Stanley's “Lectures on the Jewish Church,” p. 29.

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of sedition, more blameworthy because, having been reared in the palaces of Egypt, he would seem to mingle ingratitude with his rebellion.

The career of Moses was, we are justified in holding, from beginning to end involved in the supernatural. Around him, as we gaze back upon him from this distant day and read what then was by the light of what has since been, the heavens visibly bow down. The vision of the burning bush; the command thence given to go into Pharaoh's presence and demand the release of the people; the judgments which at his bidding came upon the land, (judgments, it has been often remarked, exactly calculated to teach as well as to confound; for as the mythology of Egypt appears to have been grounded upon the deification of the powers of nature, these visitations were signs not only to the Egyptians, but also to the Israelites, of the supremacy of a Being whom the powers of nature obeyed, who could at will control the elements and reverse their laws<sup>b</sup>); the mysterious sojourn in the mount

<sup>b</sup> Currie's "Hulsean Lectures."

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amid fires kindled by no mortal hand ; the inexplicable radiance left upon his face, the abiding proof of his admission within the everlasting doors,—these are marvels connected with the *person* of Moses which at once make his life stand alone and apart. And the end is in harmony with the beginning. There is no sublimer passage in the whole Bible than that which records the departure out of this world of the man with whom God spake face to face. Poetry never conceived so mighty a consummation of a hero's career. His eye not dim nor his natural strength abated, at the command of God, just when the wanderings are over and the settlement is to begin, the mighty deliverer withdraws from the people he has saved, ascends alone the appointed hill, and with no human eye to mark the passage of the departing spirit, renders up, as it were, directly his soul into the hands of Him who gave it. That which painting has tried to represent in the death of Joseph, the old man expiring in the arms of Jesus, is the reality of Moses' departure. It is the crea-

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ture dying in the arms of the Creator. And even yet higher the sacred narrative carries the majesty of that departure of the great lawgiver :—" And *He* buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor : but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." And as though to deepen the mystery of that strange burial, there are allusions in the New Testament to the body of Moses, which force upon us thoughts of a profounder secret still underlying the words. It is impossible to read St. Jude's circumstantial account of the Archangel Michael disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, or the appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration of the glorified body of Moses side by side with that of Elijah which never knew corruption, whilst we are assured that our Lord's own *resurrection-body* was the *first-fruits* of the tomb, Himself, i.e. the first who rose from the dead with the body of the resurrection, without recurring with yet more wondering thoughts to the *burial* by the *Lord Himself* of His departed servant in the valley of

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Beth-peor<sup>c</sup>. The allusions in the New Testament prepare us for something extraordi-

“ By Nebo’s lonely mountain,  
On this side Jordan’s wave,  
In a vale in the land of Moab,  
There lies a lonely grave.  
And no man knows that sepulchre,  
And no man saw it e’er,  
For the angels of God upturned the sod,  
And laid the dead man there.

“ That was the grandest funeral  
That ever passed on earth ;  
But no man heard the trampling,  
Or saw the train go forth.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Noiselessly as the spring-time  
Her crown of verdure weaves,  
And all the trees on all the hills  
Open their thousand leaves ;—  
So without sound of music,  
Or voice of them that wept,  
Silently down from the mountain’s crown  
The great procession swept.

“ Perchance the bald old eagle  
On grey Beth-peor’s height,  
Out of his lonely eyrie  
Looked on the wondrous sight :

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nary in the manner of Moses' departure from the earth. They are more in harmony with what is recorded of the close of his mortal existence than with the death and burial of any other of God's saints. The narrative in the Old Testament leaves scope, as it were, for the events so mysteriously indicated in the New.

We recognise then frankly the life and death of Moses as enveloped in miracle. But whilst doing this, we must remember, if we would have an intelligent conception of the whole series of events, that human side of the picture to which allusion has

Perchance the lion stalking  
Still shuns the hallowed spot,  
For beast and bird have seen and heard  
That which man knoweth not.

“O lonely grave in Moab’s land !  
O dark Beth-peor’s hill !  
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,  
And teach them to be still.  
God hath His mysteries of grace,  
Ways that we cannot tell ;  
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep  
Of him He loved so well.”

*The Burial of Moses : An Ode by C. F. Alexander.*

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been made, and the personal character of the individual.

Now for the true understanding of the character of Moses we must go back to an early period of his life. What was the starting - point of that wonderful career? This appears to be stated by St. Paul in the famous chapter in which he touches the salient characteristics of so many of the old saints :—“ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” It is at first with somewhat of surprise that we find the Apostle selecting as the great evidence of Moses’ faith, this repudiation of his connection with the kindly princess by which he had so long profited. There are other actions of the great lawgiver which we, beyond doubt, should have singled out in preference to this. Yet is it certain that St. Paul has here gone to the real fountain-head of all that followed in the history of Moses. The whole of that life of miracle did as a matter of fact turn upon the moment when, strong in his faith in the peculiar destinies of his own people, he put away from him the

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royalty of Egypt, and refused to be called any longer the son of the king's daughter.

It is curious to note the language in which the incident thus alluded to by the Apostle is related in the Book of Exodus: "And it came to pass when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren." But for St. Paul's comment we should scarcely have surmised the character of the act, or the vast moral results involved in it. We are to gather from the brief words of the narrative, it would appear, that having arrived at years of discretion, Moses, under a strong religious impulse, refused to remain any longer the inmate of Pharaoh's palace, repudiated his supposed relationship to the king's daughter, forsook the roof which had sheltered him from infancy, and identified himself henceforth with the Israelites from whom he had actually sprung. If we would appreciate the moral character of this act, we must consider for a moment what was the outer aspect of things at this crisis of Moses' history. On the one hand was Egypt. Now, whilst in other parts of Scripture where mention is made of kings

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and kingdoms, we are constrained to imagine something very different from what is now conveyed by the terms, yet it would appear that the land of Egypt was in remote times the seat of a monarchy, great according even to our present notions. There is so wide a variation in the chronology of those ages, that it is impossible to determine accurately the era of its foundation, but the conclusions which have been arrived at from an examination of astronomical and hieroglyphical records, place it not long after the deluge. When we come to Scripture, we find abundant evidence of a settled government, a complete social organization, high culture and civilization. “We have (it has been remarked<sup>a</sup>) mention of ‘officers,’ ‘captains of the guard,’ ‘keepers of the prison,’ ‘cup-bearers,’ ‘priests,’ ‘magicians,’ wise men—titles denoting recognised orders and officers of various kinds. The appointment of Joseph, the regular execution of his provisions for future want, the singular account of the enlargement of Pharaoh’s authority over his subjects by means of the

<sup>a</sup> Vide Currie’s “Hulsean Lectures.”

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famine, the collection of the inhabitants into cities, and the enactment of a separate law for the lands and dues of the priests, prove the established authority of the law; while the contempt with which they regarded the Hebrews and their abomination of shepherds seem to express the sense entertained by a well-ordered community of their superiority over roving and nomadic tribes. The jewels of silver and jewels of gold of which the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians, the ‘treasures of Egypt’ which Moses is said to have lightly esteemed, the early culture of the soil, intimated by the praise bestowed upon Sodom before its destruction, that it was ‘even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt,’ the wisdom of the Egyptians, in which Moses is said to have been learned, and which had passed into a proverb in the days of Solomon, tally with the wonderful discoveries by which the secrets of remote ages have been laid bare to the enquiries of modern research.” When therefore, at the maturity of his powers, Moses looked forth from the house of Pharaoh upon the world around, he would find

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himself, it is to be conceived, in the midst of a complete, organized system, with its usages, principles, traditions apparently as established and enduring as our own. To the majority of observers this perhaps was all which would have presented itself. There were, however, in one department of the kingdom, settlements of a distinct race. It was a race trampled down and oppressed, of habits which, as we have seen, were an abomination to the Egyptians. It had its own religious creed. In its worship it stood aloof from the great nation amidst which it had grown up. Neither in mode of life nor in belief did the cultivated Egyptians and the shepherd tribes agree together.

It is not difficult to conceive how the mind of Moses had been drawn towards this despised remnant. The story of his own finding on the river Nile, which had at the time led to the conclusion that he was one of the Hebrews' children, would naturally bring them under his notice. He was learned in the learning of Egypt. He could not therefore be ignorant of so remarkable an event in the national history as the go-

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vernment of Joseph and the arrival of Jacob's household. So probably he had learnt to ponder upon the tradition, of the dealings of Heaven with that people in old time, of the mysterious promise which was treasured in those tents of Israel as the charter of the race. And as he mused, stronger and stronger grew the conviction that the people so trodden down by man were verily the people of God ; that not in Egypt with all its premature civilization, but with Jacob the slave race, lay hidden the destinies of the world. And this conviction once arrived at, he waited but the time and the hour, and having reached the period of life when he could act for himself, he abandoned for ever the court of Pharaoh, and cast in his lot with the descendants of Abraham.

Now if this be a correct picture, we perceive at once some of the chief features of Moses' character. He was a man of acute spiritual discernment. The form under which revelation offered itself to Moses was in the claim of the Israelitish race to be the depositaries of the Divine promises. Egypt was to Moses the great world-power,

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strong in all that constitutes human strength, forward in the path of knowledge and refinement, apparently with high destinies in reserve. Israel was the embodiment of spiritual agency, of the powers of the world to come. It had nothing extraordinary visible about it to enforce conviction, no external tokens of the reality of its claims to be God's chosen instrument. A lesser heart than that of Moses would have writhed under the obloquy of having sprung from such a stock. A mind vast as his, but busied with intellectual researches alone, would have turned with contempt from a tribe asserting such magnificent claims under circumstances so contradictory. It is just here that St. Paul's words apply, telling us of that faculty of the soul of Moses which enabled him to see God where few in that age would have beheld Him. By "faith" he means that keen spiritual perception with which some are gifted, which, undazzled by the glare of false philosophies, sees outstanding in all their reality the sublime verities of the eternal world. Here lay the foundation of Moses' greatness,

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that in the midst of a highly artificial system of life, with a mind trained in all the science of his age, he believed not every spirit, but in spite of many obstacles discerned and embraced, and bowed down his whole being before the truth of God.

But the conduct of Moses in forsaking Egypt for Israel when he arrived at manhood is not only evidence of acute spiritual discernment, but of quick decision in acting. It would have been quite possible for him by meditation and reasoning to have arrived at the conclusion that the cause of the Hebrews was the cause of God, and yet to have stood aloof from the controversy between them and Egypt, between the great world-power and the spiritual element. He might have resolved to wait, as one who from peculiar circumstances had no personal interest in the matter, the result of the contention between the two, to watch as a curious problem the issue of the strife. Such a course would have been one from which God's truth has suffered in every age. But Moses going out from Pharaoh's palace and joining his lot with that of Israel is the

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exhibition of keenest spiritual perception followed up and crowned by energetic action. And on these two foundation-stones the whole after-course of the great lawgiver, humanly speaking, was raised.

We have noticed at length these elements of Moses' character, because in St. Paul's mind they were more cardinal points than even that which is elsewhere so highly commended, viz. his meekness. His is a life turning primarily on one act of faith and obedience. From the hour when he had made his choice, God led him on from height to height, till in the language of the Book of Ecclesiasticus he could be described as a “merciful man which found favour in the sight of all flesh, beloved of God and men, whose memorial is blessed.” “This Moses,” says St. Augustin, “humble in refusing so high a ministry, self-resigned in undertaking it, faithful in keeping it, energetic in executing it; in ruling the people vigilant, in correcting them ardent, burning in his love of them, patient in bearing with them, who in behalf of those whom he ruled

\* Ecclus. xlvi. 1.

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interceded with God,—this man such and so noble in his nature we love and admire and imitate as far as we may.”

We have already alluded to the wonderful manner of the death of Moses. We may not attempt to solve the whole mystery of that dying of the old leader upon the top of Pisgah alone with his God. We cannot explain it; we will not explain it away. It may be, however, worth remarking that the death of Moses and the attendant circumstances was not a mere prodigy calculated only to astound, but adapted also to teach the Israelites that truth which lies at the root of all religion, viz. the reality of another world. His death just as the borders of Canaan were reached must have been to the Hebrews a sore perplexity. Strange that he should have led them so far and not completed his task. Yet stranger still, the moral character of the event. Could it be that one trespass could exclude from a share in God’s promises? Their feet touched the borders of the land, but he their leader, so great in his faithfulness, might not enter in. A single hasty speech opposed an insuperable

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bar to his partaking of what thousands immeasurably inferior to himself were to enjoy.

There is one truth which would seem to be forced upon the dullest minds by such a dispensation of life and death, viz. the certainty of a reward not of this world. It has been often debated how far temporal promises formed the entire hope of the old saints. Doubtless the knowledge of an eternal inheritance waxed plainer as God raised up the goodly fellowship of the prophets to draw out the spiritual depths of the law, but never surely was the verity of a life beyond the grave preached more emphatically to a nation than from the mountain upon which the marvelling tribes sought for Moses and found him not. That he who had chosen to suffer affliction with God's people rather than the splendours of Egyptian royalty, should receive no recompense, could never have been a thought admitted by the grossest intellect. If Moses had led them over Jordan, and died in the lot of his own inheritance, he might have appeared to have reaped his reward; but in that sudden cutting off in the midst of his yet unwithered strength,

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in the solemn announcement that God had bidden him ascend the mountain and die, was a voice from heaven itself bidding the whole people learn that beyond death was stored up God's best reward. The death of their leader at that crisis must have been to the men of his generation a bringing life and immortality to light. And even afterwards we can conceive, that devout souls may well have been quickened in their aspirations after a better country, by the recollection that the earthly rest had never been trodden by Moses. Whatever may be the whole mystery of that strange death upon the solitary hill, it was a publication at the very outset of the Jewish economy of something better than Canaan in reserve for those who pleased God. It could never have been forgotten (and to remember it was to be carried at once in thought to a heavenly rest) that not amid the vines of Eshcol, not having eaten the new corn of the land, but within the confines of the wilderness, debarred from the earthly recompense, in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of the Lord had died.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## HOLY THURSDAY, OR ASCENSION DAY.

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### THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

PSALM xxiv.

THIS is one of the few days in the year for which our Church has selected proper Psalms, and, of those chosen, the twenty-fourth is the most obviously appropriate. It has suggested our hymns<sup>a</sup>, and the appellation “King of Glory” which echoes in our *Te Deum*. Let us go back near three thousand years, and see if we can recover the circumstances under which this remarkable composition was produced. It always greatly increases the interest of a poem

<sup>a</sup> “There the glorious triumph waits,  
Lift your heads, eternal gates;  
Christ hath vanquished death and sin,  
Take the King of Glory in.”

See also the hymn beginning “Our Lord is risen from the dead.”

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when we can revive the events which called it forth. Now our Church's use of this sacred song at the consecration of churches, when the bishop and clergy make the circuit of the new building in procession repeating it, is a witness to its originating from a celebration of the same kind. There can be little doubt that we have here a psalm of the Prophet-King, composed for the sake of being sung when "David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his place, which he had prepared for it<sup>b</sup>."

That was a great day for the Israelites, both in a political and a religious point of view. They were attaining a position which they had never before occupied. Instead of there being no king in Israel, and every man doing that which was right in his own eyes, they had sprung up into a great and united nation. God had given them a king, such as the human heart desires to devote itself to, with abandonment and enthusiasm, but is seldom indeed granted to the prayers of empires. David's romantic history must, in

<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. xv. 3.

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itself, have gone a long way to make him a nation's darling<sup>o</sup>. His personal prowess, his chivalrous generosity, his care for his followers, his tact, his anxiety to conciliate, had won him all hearts. The nation was no longer exhausted by civil war. They were in the first ardour of attachment to their heroic prince. In the East the personal character of monarchs has always had great weight, and empires have, at times, shot up with what appears to us preternatural speed. It is difficult, at this distance of time, to discern all the second causes which Providence then used to exalt Israel. But we can imagine many which may have helped on the result. The Phœnicians may have found their interest in friendly relations with the rising greatness of David. The course of trade from India may have been already about to fall into Hebrew hands. A little later, and David triumphs over powerful confederacies, and makes the Hebrew name respected far and wide. He amasses trea-

<sup>o</sup> Our great and good Alfred, who owed so much to David and his Psalms, is styled in Anglo-Saxon poetry "England's darling."

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sures which shew how rich and powerful must have been his tributaries. But these were his lowest claims to the affections of his people. His was a heart burning with love to God; his trials and persecutions had been blessed to him; he had found God a sure refuge; and, in the school of adversity, had been disciplined for the duties that now devolved on him. In his hands there was no fear that the newly-established kingly power would encroach on the province of the priesthood. He is most anxious to put the Levites in their proper place, and says to them, "Because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order<sup>d</sup>."

Some have thought he had himself been educated in the schools of the prophets<sup>e</sup>, and certainly he was one of the greatest of "the goodly fellowship." Nothing was dearer to his heart than organizing the services of the sanctuary, dividing the singers into courses, providing them with instruments, and promoting sacred song. His

<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. xv. 13.

<sup>e</sup> Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."

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reign occurred too at a time when the widest of fields was open for a monarch thus disposed. The ark of the covenant had, in Eli's time, been removed from Shiloh by unhal-lowed hands, who superstitiously thought that the dead matter would yield an aid which the living God withheld from the profane. From its captivity among the Philistines it had indeed been restored, but not replaced in a scene worthy of it as the great centre of the religious system of the country. It had been housed in a place to which it seemed accidentally brought, and from which the people had not zeal enough to fetch it. Perhaps this decay of their ecclesiastical sys-tem, on which they had leant for guidance in peace and war, made the people desire an earthly king, like the nations around them, instead of valuing their high privilege of having the Lord for their King in a peculiar sense. The ark, and religion with it, had been too long buried in obscurity, so that the services of the tabernacle had been in-terrupted, and the Hebrews no longer saw the tokens of a present but invisible King, in the sacrifices and observances ordained

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through Moses : they enquired not at the ark “in the days of Saul<sup>f</sup>. ”

But these sad days had now come to an end, the “man after God’s own heart” was not afraid of his earthly monarchy being thrown into the shade if he invited to his new capital the presence of the King of kings. Already he was planning a “place not for man<sup>g</sup>, ” “a house exceeding magnifical<sup>h</sup>. ”

It had not been lost upon him that the presence of the ark had brought a blessing on the house of Obed-edom. The law of Moses had prescribed no special place for the abode of the Tabernacle, and it was therefore open to David to desire it for the city which he had just captured from the Jebusites, and which was about to become “the city of the great King.” Political reasons may have induced him to wish for a capital more central than Hebron, one that should be connected with the tribe of his predecessor Saul, as well as with his own. The peculiarities of the site may

<sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. xiii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid. xxix. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. xxii. 5.

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have commended it to one who knew what fortresses and capitals should be like—not to say that every monarch likes to originate, and that the capture and adaptation of this hitherto virgin fortress may have been that which impressed the neighbouring nations more than his other successes; but doubtless, unknown to him, God in His providence was moving him in the selection of that which was to be the scene of the greatest events ever transacted on our earth. Salem was being prepared for the true Melchisedek. The city, whose name was to live for ever in “Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” was selected by no less an one than the Most High, however David may have seemed to himself to have been acting on purely earthly considerations. It was the Lord who had chosen Sion to be an habitation for Himself: He had longed for her. “This shall be My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have a delight therein<sup>1</sup>. ”

It was no ordinary day which marked

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxii. 14.

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Jerusalem as thenceforth the most sacred spot on this globe, dear for the temple services of a thousand years, dear for the Redeemer's sake, because there He taught and healed, there He saved others and would not save Himself, there He died, there He rose again, thence He ascended, and thither, perhaps, He will return to judgment. It was the place which God chose out of all their tribes to put His Name there<sup>j</sup>.

It was a great day when David, his name yet untarnished by his after sin, was able at last to inaugurate the new centre of religious and political life for Israel. "Thither were the tribes to go up, even the tribes of the Lord. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself<sup>k</sup>." "Behold how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity<sup>l</sup>." "The hills stand about Jerusalem: even so standeth the Lord round about His people<sup>m</sup>." "The hill of Sion is a fair place, and the joy of the

<sup>j</sup> Deut. xii. 5.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. cxxii. 4, 6, 3.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid. exxxiii. 1.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid. cxxv. 2.

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whole earth: upon the north side lieth the city of the great King<sup>n</sup>."

Hither were pilgrims to come for the great feasts. Here would the Lord hold, as it were, His court. Here should the daily sacrifices, the shewbread, the perpetual lamp be supplied<sup>o</sup>. Here should singers chant those psalms which the troubles or joys of David had drawn from him.

Above all, the ark, the most sacred symbol of the religion, which had been captive, but of which the captivity had been avenged on the adversary, should here be seated in a permanent abode. What had looked like ignominy had turned into glory.

In the land of the Philistines God had protected His own cause. Dagon and the other gods of the uncircumcised had been humbled. Seeming defeat had turned into real triumph. Among His own people the Lord had enforced the need of reverence

<sup>n</sup> Ps. xlvi. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Till the temple was built the services of the Tabernacle continued at Gibeon, while something, perhaps, like the later synagogue worship, was performed at Jerusalem. 1 Chron. xvi. 37, 39.

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and obedience. Many had been smitten at Beth-shemesh<sup>p</sup>. Uzzah had recently fallen for his error<sup>q</sup>.

The panic cry was, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall He go up from us?” So great was the anxiety felt lest the infliction which had blasted Uzzah should be repeated, that when it was found that the Levites had advanced with the ark six paces without provoking the Divine vengeance, seven bullocks and seven rams were offered in acknowledgment of the mercy. The king himself took part as a chorister in the procession<sup>r</sup>, having on him an ephod of linen, and “all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cor-

<sup>p</sup> 1 Sam. vi. 19.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Sam. vi. 8.

<sup>r</sup> There is in human nature a love of processions, whether they be of soldiers, officials, or functionaries of any sort. A well-executed movement, on an occasion of importance, gratifies our love of order, progress, and rhythm, our taste for beauty and grandeur.

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net, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps<sup>\*</sup>."

These circumstances account for the last four jubilant verses, which contain the essence of the Psalm, having prefixed to them the more solemn prelude<sup>t</sup> wherein attention is drawn to the need of holiness for all those who are to come near to the great Being who is taking possession of an earthly dwelling-place. "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is: the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein." It is His, for He created, and He sustains the universe. And is this hill indeed to become the Lord's? Is He vouchsafing to allow this to become His holy place? Who shall venture to ascend where such a Being dwells, of what sort must the worshipper be that would fain stand in such a presence?

He that hath clean hands, whose actions are innocent, and whose heart, thoughts, inward principles are also pure; who hath

\* 1 Chron. xv. 28.

<sup>t</sup> See Rev. J. F. Thrupp's "Introduction to the Study and Use of the Psalms."

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not lifted up his soul unto vanity, i.e. who hath not sought to idols of any kind, who also hath not sworn deceitfully. This is he, and he only, who shall receive the blessing which God is ready to impart, and shall obtain righteousness from Him who desires to be known as a Saviour. This is the generation of them that seek Him. Those, and those only, who thus seek Thy face, are really Jacob. Others may approach outwardly, but they are not Israelites indeed<sup>u</sup>. By this prelude David bids away the profane, and administers a warning and caution to himself, his family, the officiating priests and Levites, the singers, yea, the whole nation. A Michal was there, to shew the warning was not unnecessary. But, having borne this testimony, he is at liberty to burst out with the strain that has been pent within his bosom. They may have striven up the ascent, chanting the words of warning, but now that the height is won, the ancient gates shall be summoned, and told that they are all too mean and narrow for the greatness of the King who comes to

<sup>u</sup> See Hengstenberg *in loc.*

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take possession. It is the King of glory who is coming in, Jehovah strong and mighty in battle ; yea, He is the Lord of the hosts of Israel, the God who shews His glory by enabling the armies of His people to do valiantly. Of course, the inference was not remote that, because so great a God abode in Sion, the humblest Israelite should take courage, and believe that greater was He who was in the midst of Israel, than all the visible array of the most formidable adversary.

Now the application of this Psalm to our Christian mysteries depends on the ark's being in some sort a figure of our Lord. Enshrined in the most holy place, in the centre of the Jewish system, connected with the law, the oracle, the mercy-seat, the cherubim, the blood of the great day of atonement, the covenant, the priesthood, the manna, it finds its antitype in the humanity of the Son of God. That human nature, once in the hands of enemies, once captive, once subject to insults, had proved the ruin of those that thought they held it captive ; seeming defeat had turned out

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to be real triumph, and amid the jubilant exultation of all orders of angelic intelligences, the King of Glory was this day conducted to a permanent resting-place. David's festival was the ascension of Christ in figure, the Church's festival to-day is the ascension of Christ in reality.

As far as this world saw, how simple were the circumstances of this day's great event! One in the form of man was leading out His Apostles to the well-known scene. The eleven still exhibited, in the world's judgment, marks of their Galilean origin, their dress homely, their appearance for the most part, as of fishermen. But, as far as the other world was concerned, what pomp and splendour did honour to the day! Surely the impatience of angels was no longer restrained, their burning desire to do honour to "our Champion and their King" was no longer repressed, but each spirit from creation's utmost bound, was allowed to take part in that high festival, and to claim an interest in one who had honoured all creatures by vouchsafing to take to Himself a created nature, and to

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do lowly work for one of the lowest orders of spirits.

That triumphant procession, conducting Him to take possession of the throne of the universe, then first occupied by one in human form, accompanying Him, as far as any could accompany, towards the inner presence-chamber of the invisible Father, that glorious pomp had been faintly imaged by the Jewish ceremonial which accompanied the ark to its resting-place ; and such is the unity of the Divine economy, the very song produced of old to celebrate the Jewish transaction, still, after nigh three thousand years, suits our feelings, and suggests our duties. Of old they sang as the procession winding up the steep reached the height of Sion, Lift up your heads ; Expand, for He is a great King, unconfined by space, no temple is august enough for Him ; widen yourselves all ye can, for He deigns to enter in. “ Who is this King of Glory ? ” they asked, in order that they might have the pleasure of answering “ He is the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle ; ” and then they thought of kings smitten, and Jericho pro-

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strate, and Goliath slain. But we take up the notes in a higher strain, we call on gates that are really everlasting, to expand, and declare that even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. We call Him mighty in battle, for He hath subdued Satan and the grave, He hath spoiled Hades and the tomb.

And fitly, too, the other part of the Psalm suits the Christian as well as the Jewish celebration. When God was taking possession of Sion, the question was raised, Will His coming indeed be a blessing to us? Are we of His true people? Not all those who are attracted by the show, not every Michal that looketh out of a window, are worthy to accompany the ark: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?"

And the old moral requisites need just as much (nay far more) to be enforced now, if the Saviour's ascension is to be a blessing to us. His exaltation in human nature causes us to enquire how we too may be exalted, how our death may issue in resurrection and ascension, how if He is gone within

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for us<sup>x</sup>, we can be conducted there where He is gone before. The question still is, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall dwell in His holy place?"

The clean hands, the pure heart, the true tongue, are still required. But then the second dispensation not only requires these graces, but furnishes them, not merely lays down what we ought to be, but furnishes the means of becoming such. For He is gone, that the Sanctifier may come; and the heart that welcomes Him shall become pure, and the hands which He moves shall be kept clean, and the tongue which He rules shall be true; and so man may receive the blessing from the Lord, even the blessing of entering in the Saviour's train, when, for the last time, the everlasting doors shall be bidden to unclose to receive the returning Saviour, not then, as on this day, alone of human kind, but followed then by the ten thousands of His saints, with bodies like unto His glorious body, and with souls whose virtues shall be the reflection of His.

Observe, as the introduction of the ark to

<sup>x</sup> "On our behalf," Heb. vi. 20.

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Sion was the inauguration of a new place and new order of things, so the ascension of the Saviour, in His human nature, and His session on His Father's right hand on high, have, so to say, localised heaven for us, and placed us in an altogether new connection with the unseen world.

There was a new thing, this day, in heaven,—a wonder: One in man's form was mounting the throne of the universe; the sovereignty over creation was henceforth to be exercised through a human soul, lodged in a human body. At the name of Jesus, that man's name, bowed all beings in heaven. “He is gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” Subject to Him, as God, they had of course always been; but subject to Him, as man, they were now made. All power was given to Him in heaven and in earth; given to Him, i.e. as man, for as God it had been ever His,—power in heaven, power over angels. And so this day, when He assumed it, this was the angels' day, a day more fit for them to celebrate

\* 1 St. Pet. iii. 22.

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in for man, as belonging to regions which, present, are theirs, not ours. And surely they had reason to celebrate it, for by becoming man He had come nearer to them as well as to us. Though He had not taken on Him their nature, it was a creature He had taken, and in that they could now nigh to Him, as they could not do before His incarnation. They could now behold His qualities once undeveloped in Godhood, such as patience and self-sacrifice; now He had a new right to be saluted as King of Glory. King of Glory He had indeed, in one sense, been from eternity, dwelling in light unapproachable, but King of Glory He was now in a better sense, because He had won glory, had earned it by hard labour, and the toil of conflict, by a lifelong energy of self-denial, and hence tried by the agony and the cross. King He is, whose glory is the moral one of philanthropy and the love of excellence, which produces goodness, and delights in it when produced. We may appeal to men by His title "King of glory," we may add with Him what it is He has taught

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us to consider glory, viz. succouring the distressed, and beseech Him so to succour us. He is man still; He did not lay aside His human soul and body; He did not unrobe Himself; He did not cast aside our nature, as that which had done its work, as a mean instrument, unfit to be transferred to the worlds of light which He was about to enter, or as incapable of sustaining the government of the universe. No, in that form, that manhood which He took of His Virgin mother, that body which hung on the Cross between malefactors, in that He reigns, in that He will return, the same Jesus, unchanged in heart, in sympathy, and love to His people. We may plead with Him as man, for, being the Head, the Chief, of men, all have, as it were, a right in Him, a claim upon Him, even as among soldiers the humblest member of a corps feels that he has some tie which connects him with his chief. The humblest among us has, as man, a claim on the Son of man.

The day is coming when He shall publicly, before the assembled universe, recognise this claim. There shall be a third

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ascension of the Christ. The first was in figure, when He was represented by the ark. The second, as on this day, when He ascended from Mount Olivet; the third shall be accomplished when the hosts of the redeemed shall be seen to ascend with Him.

They were indeed virtually and implicitly in Him, when He lifted up His hands near Bethany, and was received up, but He has yet manifestly to fulfil the type of the ark's ascension.

The first sacred procession up the hill of Sion was composed of mortal men, frail and imperfect, but elevated above themselves by the occasion. The Israelites did not yet know what an influence they were to exercise among the nations, from that land which God had given them as a centre of operations, on Egypt, Greece, Rome, and the East. They could not know how their psalms (that very one sung for the first time that day, the "new song" of the occasion) should be translated into all languages of the earth; nay, they did not know that of that David whom they saw

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in a linen ephod leading the procession before the ark, humbling, and yet not lowering himself (for what king but would be honoured to wear a surplice in God's service?)—that of his seed God would take flesh, that Incarnate God should be David's Son, after the flesh; they knew not that they were rehearsing some of the highest mysteries of our religion, and that the scene typified something greater than the removal of an ark that had to be carried, and the consecration of a tabernacle which, after all, would have to be desecrated.

The second procession was composed of angels conducting Him, whom the ark prefigured, into the true sanctuary, heaven itself. They bade the everlasting doors open which had so long excluded every son of man. Angels delighted to ask, Who is the King of glory? and angels delighted to answer, It is the Lord strong and mighty: strong, when He humbled Himself; mighty, when He bowed Himself.

The third procession is yet to be formed. It will consist of men immortal, men redeemed, of saints made perfect, celebrating

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the completed work of the King of glory, and inaugurating a kingdom and a priesthood which shall last for ever.

“ Then all the halls of Sion  
For aye shall be complete,  
And, in the land of beauty,  
All things of beauty meet.”

The cry has to be raised once more, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates.” Perhaps it is not altogether inadmissible to connect this last ascension with the iteration of the enquiry in the old Jewish Psalm. The question is twice asked, “Who is the King of Glory?” The first answer refers to His conflicts and victories, “It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.” That first reply may serve on the occasion of His ascension from Mount Olivet. But when the cry shall be raised again it will be more proper to describe Him, as in the closing reply, by His title “Lord of Hosts,” for then the number of the elect will have been completed, that great multitude which no man can number of all who have gotten the victory. The true David shall then enter the true Sion at the head of the true Israel.

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No Michal shall disturb that solemnity, no Joab shall be found in those ranks, no future fall of a saint or ruin of a Church shall then be possible, for His people shall be all holy, shall all have clean hands and pure hearts, and shall have sealed to them for ever in the very fullest sense the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of their salvation. O may we have a place in that procession, and for His sake, in His train, pass within the everlasting doors !

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

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### CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST WITHIN THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

THE nature of the Catholic Church, its relation to its great Head, and His operation on its behalf, have all, from very early times, and by a peculiar act of Divine forethought, been traced in outline, in the ancient religious economies, and in the Mosaic more especially. Those forms of religion not only served their immediate purpose, of keeping man near to God ; they were also, as they progressed, a *careful copy* of that perfect religion which was to come in Christ Jesus. And doubtless they were so constituted for this among other profound reasons, that the subjects of the more glorious and perfect dispensation might, by perusing the provisions of the earlier systems, understand their own privileges and

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duties. That this is so, is sufficiently proved by the fact that the Holy Spirit, when He would convey to us a conception of the highest mysteries of Christianity, continually represents them in terms of the patriarchal and Mosaic systems. For example, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the Revelation of St. John, Christ is supremely and emphatically described as a *Priest*, and His work as a *ritual* and a *sacrificial* one. His Body is at once a Temple and a Sacrifice, and He is a Lamb slain; His life was a “preparing” of that “Body” for sacrifice; His last act in life was the presenting of it as such; His Resurrection was the token of its acceptance in that character; His Ascension was the carrying of it into the Holy of holies; and heaven itself, yea, the Lord God Almighty Himself<sup>a</sup>, is set forth as a wondrous Temple for the perpetual presentation of it. But for the explanation of all these terms, temple, priest, sacrifice, and the like, and for the understanding of the effects of a religious system thus constituted, we are plainly referred to the accounts of

<sup>a</sup> Rev. xxi. 22.

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these things contained in the ancient Scriptures : for there and there only do we find such a system drawn out for us, and seen in operation.

In truth, both the Mosaic service, and the subsequent structure of Solomon's Temple, were, avowedly, *copied* from a state of things, then future, but now, by God's mercy, gloriously present and in operation —the Church of Christ. For “ See,” said God to Moses, “ that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount.” And again, we read in the Book of Chronicles<sup>b</sup>, that “ David gave to Solomon his son the *pattern of all that he had by the Spirit*, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and for the courses of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord. . . . All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.” Now, *what was it* that was thus shewn both to Moses and David, as the pattern after which they were to arrange the services of the Israelitish Church ?

<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, sq.

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It was *not*, then, as some might be ready to suppose, that *still future* state of things, which we look for, when this world shall have come to an end, and the Church shall have entered on her triumphant state in heaven,—*not this*, but the Church as she is *at this hour*, and has been ever since our Lord's ascension; the Church in her present state of warfare and expectation; the Church reaching from earth to heaven, and evermore working out her high destiny in accordance with the wondrous and supernatural laws of her being; with Christ for her High Priest, Heaven for her Holy of Holies, and the presentation of the One Sacrifice of Christ for her perpetual service. So St. Paul describes it; speaking throughout of the then already present Church of God as being the thing which was shewed to Moses, and after which the services were copied, both in the Tabernacle at Mount Sinai, and in the Temple at Jerusalem. “Of the things which have been spoken,” says he, “this is the sum: We have such an high priest,”—such as Aaron in his operation, such as Melchisedek in his unchangeableness,—“who is set

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on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." For, "the priests, according to the law," he proceeds, "serve," or minister, "unto the copy and shadow of heavenly things; but Christ hath obtained," and exercises continually, "a more excellent ministry," even that glorious and perfect ministry which Moses was enjoined to imitate<sup>c</sup>.

It is certain, then, that in the religious ordinances of the old world, though more especially in those of the chosen people, we may contemplate, imaged as in a mirror spread out by the hand of God Himself, our position in Christ; — the whole form and features of His Holy Catholic Church. To take one example: When St. Paul would instruct us as to the reality of that union and oneness which we have with each other, and with Christ, through partaking of His Body and Blood, he desires us to "behold Israel after the flesh," and there to read, in the fact that "they which eat of the sacri-

<sup>c</sup> Heb. viii. 1—6.

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fices are" held to be "partakers of the one altar," the very image of that mysterious verity. This significant suggestion of the holy Apostle it should be our care to act upon. And it is our purpose, in this Tract, briefly to draw out the main particulars of the ancient Mosaic system, considered as a divinely executed draught of the Christian economy. Such cannot be a profitless speculation. It is well known (to adopt a familiar illustration) that the building up and completion of a most gigantic, but at the same time the most unfinished of continental cathedrals,—that of Cologne,—is now carrying on with an effectiveness and a certainty mainly due to the happy discovery of the original draught of it, setting forth in every particular the entire conception of it, as it lay in the mind of the architect five hundred years ago. And can we doubt, that the building up to completeness of that yet unfinished mystery, the Catholic Church (so wondrously left to human agency, under the eye of the great Master Builder, to accomplish), is then most sure to be after the mind of Christ, when we are careful to study

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well that wondrous draught and plan of it which, drawn out by the divinely-guided hand of Moses, is indicated to us by the no less divinely-inspired finger of St. Paul ?

It must be borne in mind, in the first place, that, as has been before intimated, certain great and leading lines of that heavenly draught or copy had already, from the most primeval days, been laid down. Every ordinance of true religion imparted by God to man, from the very hour of the Fall, was unquestionably a copy, as far as it went, of the perfect scheme and constitution to come. The "firstling lamb" of Abel's burnt-offering was not less truly a copy of the Lamb of God, than was the corresponding offering in the Mosaic system. Again, in the mysterious Priesthood of Melchise-dek, his ancestry all unrecorded, and himself coming forth to view, as it were, out of the recesses of one eternity, and entering into those of another (so passing is the glimpse we catch of him in the historic page of Holy Scripture), was set forth the Divine and eternal Sonship of the High Priest of the future economy. And thus, "when Israel

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came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among the strange people," already had the two cardinal features of the Gospel been disclosed—Sacrifice and Priest—some precious Thing to offer, a prevailing and a Divine Person to offer it. But it remained for the Mosaic system to set forth many important particulars, and to complete the circle of conceptions belonging to the vast mystery of redemption and salvation.

The *sphere* in which this imitative scheme was to be exhibited had already been determined. A race had been set apart for the purpose. Federally in the person of Abraham, and personally in that of his descendants, had a portion been chosen, and as it were *carved out*, from the general mass of humanity. By a kind of new creation had this race been formed, and supernaturally privileged and endowed. And when it had experienced a shameful Fall—for such must the going down into Egypt and the sojourn there, taken in all their circumstances, be accounted—and it had in consequence fallen under grievous bondage of body and soul—physical bondage to Pha-

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raoh, spiritual thraldom to the gods of Egypt —then had a wondrous redemption from both been effected by the blood of a lamb. And into the privileges of the redemption, both temporal and spiritual, thus effected, was every individual soul in that race solemnly admitted, first by sacramental participation of the lamb slain, and afterwards by baptism in the cloud and in the sea. The close resemblance of all this to the original from which it was divinely drawn, viz. the creation and fall of man, his redemption by the Blood of Christ, the Sacramental participation of that Sacrifice, at the very time, by the first Apostles, and their subsequent baptism by the Holy Ghost into the privileges of the Christian estate, need hardly be pointed out.

But this was, after all, only the introduction and inauguration of the race into a new relation towards God. It still remained to be seen in what way it would be taught to act and maintain itself in that relation, so as to accomplish the part destined for it. With this view an entirely new system of appliances was now set on

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foot, consisting chiefly, however, in two main circumstances: a *new and an abiding Presence of God among them*; and *a continual presentation of them, by certain ordained means, in that Presence*. This, it is much to be observed, was altogether a new feature in the spiritual history of mankind. Somewhat, doubtless, had the world already known of the visible Presence of God on earth, even since the Fall. More especially had such Presence been vouchsafed to the “first fathers of the holy seed,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Somewhat, again, had they practised of Divine worship and service, of presentation of themselves to God, through the appointed and indispensable medium of sacrifice. But the Presence and the service had been both alike intermittent and occasional. Such a thing as a *perpetual, abiding Presence of God*, beyond that whereby He is present in all His works,—this had been hitherto unknown. Neither had the conception of *continued, unceasing Divine service and sacrifice* been entertained or realized. Both of these, however, did the Almighty provide in the newly enjoined system. The very charter of

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t, as laid down in Exodus, ch. xxix. 38—45, was, that *their High Priest should, on their behalf, offer upon the altar a lamb, morning and evening, day by day continually*, with an offering of bread and wine: while, on His part, God declared that, on condition of their thus approaching Him, He would vouchsafe them His continual Presence and Glory. “Now this,” it was said, “is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning; and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: and with the lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout all your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle (or Israel, margin) shall be sanctified by My glory.”

We have cited at length this ordinance of the Mosaic system, because of its vast

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importance, both as the very centre of that system in itself, and also as setting forth and interpreting to us, in some most important particulars, our position as Christians. We ought clearly to understand, otherwise we shall miss the true characteristics of the Israelitish and the Christian economy, what the purport of this peculiar Presence, and this continued sacrificial Presentation, was.

First, then, as regards the Presence: it was, as we know from various circumstances attending it, an awful and majestic, but at the same time a hallowing and beatifying Presence. In these respects it far transcended anything that we read of in the previous history of man, unless we may assume a visible Presence at the gates of Eden after the Fall. The appearance of a burning lamp, shewn on one occasion in a vision to Abraham, was the nearest approach to it hitherto. But this, as well as that to Moses in the bush, was in truth the prelude of the Presence now permanently vouchsafed. That Presence now became abiding; and it would seem to have been

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in all respects a close *kindred* Presence, both in its nature and effects, to that whereby the Almighty dwells upon the Throne of His Majesty in Heaven. True to the wondrous character of the Mosaic economy as already unfolded, this Majesty, this Presence, was a copy of *that*. Not the Tabernacle itself only, nor the Temple itself only, but the Majestic Presence that dwelt therein, was, "according to" the awful "pattern," "shewed unto Moses in the mount." Not that it attained in glory or excellence to that heavenly and transcending Presence. It was, as Hooker speaks, a restrained Presence; restrained in its glory, restrained in the sphere of its operation. "He was present here," says Ebrard, "not as the Creator and Governor of the world (as such He dwelt in heaven), but as the covenant God of His people." With this limitation, however, it was already true, and surely it was a glorious and a consoling truth, that "the Tabernacle of God was with men, and He dwelt with them, and they were His people, and God Himself was with them, and was their God." Heaven, for certain purposes, and

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to certain privileged persons, was now on earth, by a real removal and descent thither, according to a certain *mode of Presence*, of the Divine Glory. A present God, seated on a throne of mercy, might now be approached at a particular spot; a Presence for sanctification, for acceptance, and for blessing, abode in a holy place, was diffused throughout the chosen land, and gathered the favoured people “under the covering of its wings.”

But, secondly, it is no less important that we should understand the purport of this continued act of *sacrificial presentation*, which was the condition of the Presence above spoken of. It was, as we learn from the original charter already cited, and from many circumstances of the system—it was the ordained means of the *actual and continual presentation before the Presence of the whole people of Israel*. It was not merely a perpetual atonement for the sins of Israel. It was also a perpetual *presentation with acceptance, of the entire nation, on the basis of that atonement*. The lamb represented, and in a manner contained, the children of Israel.

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When God looked upon it, He not only remembered his covenant and promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He also beheld their seed cleansed by it; drawing near unharmed in it; rising in grateful clouds of incense, and in the accepted sacrificial flame; an offering made by fire of a “sweet savour unto the Lord.” This was the original promise:—“There will I meet with the *children of Israel*.” And yet how small a portion of the people, and on what rare occasions, could be present in person there! And again it was said, “There will I accept you;” “I will accept you with your sweet savour, and I will be sanctified in you<sup>a</sup>.” The Tabernacle itself was called “the Tabernacle of meeting,” (not, as we render it, “of the congregation”); because of the continual Presence there, face to face, in a mystery, of God with Israel, and Israel with God. Thus was the great truth of our real engrafting into Christ, and our presentation and acceptance *in Him*, wonderfully copied and foreshewn.

The same was indicated by portions of the

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xx. 40, 41.

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*dress of the high priest*, who was to offer this sacrifice. He was a representative person, not merely as *standing on behalf* of the nation, but by a real, actual, though deeply mysterious presentation, setting them before God. For Aaron was to “bear the names of the children of Israel both upon his shoulder and on the breastplate upon his breast, when he went into the holy place, to be a memorial before the Lord continually.” And “the plate of pure gold upon the forefront of his mitre” was designed “to bear”—that is, in a mystery to bring thither for atonement—“the iniquity” or imperfections “of the holy things which the children of Israel should hallow, or offer;” . . . “it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.” Here again were the persons of the offerers gathered into the *person of their high priest*. *In him* they and their services were cleansed and accepted; a glorious copy, or “type,” indeed, of the presentation of man in the Person of Christ, as Priest no less than as Sacrifice.

Here, then, in this great continual sacri-

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fice, was set forth with the utmost distinctness, that which is at this hour carried on in the heavenly places. In the glorious system of the Catholic Church, Christ, the great High Priest, continually presents His Sacrifice of Himself, once offered on the cross, in the very majestic Presence of God Himself. And in that Sacrifice He presents, truly engrafted into His Body, members of Him, both as Victim and as Priest, all those who are His. They already "sit together with Christ in the heavenly places." There God the Father beholds them accepted in the Beloved. There their offering of themselves in body, soul, and spirit, is accepted, cleansed from all imperfection by union to the One Sacrifice. There their action as priests unto God is effective through their engrafting into the One High Priest. Nor only so. As all Israel, in their persons and in their land, were conceived to be, and really were, compassed about by the hallowing and protecting Presence, which had its peculiar seat upon the cherubim; as they were in all their relations and actions of life, a "peculiar treasure," "a holy

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people ;” as they were blessed “in the basket, and in the store, in their going out, and in their coming in,” because of the Presence in which they stood, through the continual burnt offering ; even so is it, only to much loftier purposes, with the faithful now. The ever-reiterated truth which rises so continually to the lips of St. Paul, that they “are in Christ”—*that* Christ who is ever presenting Himself before the Father—this truth makes all their actions and relations to be hallowed and dignified indeed; since whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they are now evermore accepted with the Father.

But there remains one more feature of Israelitish service which we must take into the account, if we would thoroughly comprehend, in its entire range, either that dispensation or our own. Though this great continual Burnt-offering was the centre of the system, the secret and the vehicle, so to speak, of the Israelites’ continual acceptance before God ; yet the benefits of it were not enjoyed, nor indeed was the system itself complete, apart from the active and obedient co-

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operation of the people. As the high priest offered *in the name* of the people, and as carrying them upon his heart before God, it was expected and required that their devout assent and hearty desires should go along with the offering priest and the offered sacrifice. For this purpose it had become the religious practice of the nation to make use of the particular hours of sacrifice as hours of private and congregational prayer. "At the hour of incense" and sacrifice, the people were found "praying without," not only, as we know from the New Testament, at Jerusalem, but at a distance from it, as the instance of Daniel abundantly proves. Through that one sacrifice they prayed; in that sacrifice they offered themselves, not mystically only, through the person and mediation of the high priest, but personally, by their own will and their own prayer.

But this was not all. They were empowered and required to unite themselves to that sacrifice, and to appropriate the benefits of it, not merely by acts of the will, by pleadings and by prayers, but also by actually *partaking*, after a divinely provided

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manner, of the sacrifice itself. That all Israel should literally and physically eat of the *one* lamb daily offered on the altar, was of course impossible. But it was ordained, pursuant, no doubt, to certain ancient laws of sacrifice, that they should from time to time bring a lamb or other offering of their own. This being slain, and the choicest part laid, to be consumed by fire, *upon the one sacrifice*<sup>e</sup> which was kept burning slowly all day for the purpose, the remainder was eaten with joy and thanksgiving by priest and people. And by this means they were held and conceived to eat, and to all practical intents and purposes they did eat, of the one lamb and the one sacrifice; and by the same means they had mysterious partaking and communion with God Himself; the part consumed upon the altar being called His “food” and His “bread.” To this it is that St. Paul plainly alludes, when he says of “Israel after the flesh,” that “they which ate of the sacrifices were partakers of the altar”—that is, mani-

<sup>e</sup> See Lev. iii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Lev. iii. 11, xxi. 6. See Patrick *in loc.*

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festly, of the one sacrifice upon the altar—for hereby, his argument implies, they all became one body.

Thus did they, thrice in the year at least, at their great feasts, and at other times of their own “voluntary will,” make solemn and thankful remembrance before God of the one original Passover sacrifice, by which they had been redeemed unto God, and plead in the most prevailing manner the virtue and powers of it;—unite themselves afresh to the great continual offering;—lay themselves, in a wonderfully real manner, upon the altar for dedication and acceptance;—and receive from the altar, through the medium of the one priest and sacrifice, all the blessings of the covenant.

It is impossible that anything should more accurately foreshew the means by which, under the Christian dispensation, men were to make remembrance of, and plead the once offered but continually presented Sacrifice of Christ, unite themselves afresh to it, lay themselves in a mystery on the heavenly altar for dedication and acceptance, and receive from that altar,

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through the One Priest and the One Sacrifice, all the gifts and blessings of the new and perfect covenant.

The one great difference—setting aside the more glorious and eternal purposes of the Gospel ordinance—is that the material things now presented and partaken of, are no longer slain victims, but the pure and simple elements of bread and wine, themselves also made much use of under the old system. In and by these, mysteriously identified by our Lord's own words with His Body and Blood, continually presented in a mystery in Heaven (as the personal and congregational offerings of the Israelites were identified with their continual offering,) Christians have that wondrous and glorious “communion” of which St. Paul speaks; they “dwell in Christ, and Christ in them, are one with Christ, and Christ with them;” and in Him, and with Him, they offer and present, in the true Holy of Holies, their souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto the Father; and in Him and with Him are accepted.

We have desired to draw attention to

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a much-neglected portion of Holy Scripture,—the Mosaic ordinances,—as a divinely provided source of instruction and illustration, respecting some important features of the Christian economy. And surely the view here given tends to elevate as well as quicken our conceptions of that glorious work in which clergy and laity, in their different degrees, are admitted to co-operate with their High Priest in heaven. It is plain they assist *continually*, in all their actions, though especially in their religious ones, at a lofty and glorious solemnity; a solemnity which even the continual sacrifice and service of the Mosaic high priest and people,—with all its splendour and array of appliances, its awful Presence, its inscrutable Holy of Holies, its mysteriously vested and commissioned priest, its prevailing incense, its gorgeous Tabernacle and Temple,—can but very faintly image forth to us. They can take up, in a sense which Israel never knew, the words and the songs, the religious position and action of Israel. In “the tranquil operation of that great mystery the Church,” they behold with

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their eyes things which (with the single exception of Moses) “eye had not seen, neither ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive; but which God had prepared for them that love Him.” With Heaven for their Holy of Holies, Christ for continual Sacrifice and Priest, His Spirit for their altar-fire, angels and “the Holy Church throughout the world” for worshippers, Holy Eucharists for presentation of and union to the One Sacrifice, and holy deeds of faith and love for offerings,—they chant, as a Church, a ceaseless *Te Deum* to the Divine and Heavenly Majesty, in the Presence of which they are admitted, in Christ, continually to dwell.

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# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## WHIT-SUNDAY.

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### A PENTECOSTAL SERMON.

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ST. JOHN v. 17.

"JESUS ANSWERED THEM, MY FATHER WORKETH  
HITHERTO, AND I WORK."

WHEN our Lord answered the Jews in these words, they immediately took exception to the claim of equality with God which they contained, and sought the more to kill Him, because of what they esteemed to be blasphemy.

That the words do contain that claim, and that the Jews were quite right in understanding them so, is plain not only from a variety of other passages of Holy Scripture, but also from the way in which in the succeeding discourse our Lord replies to their objection, and explains the relation in which He stands to the Father.

#### A PENTECOSTAL SERMON.

But the objection thus taken by the Jews is taken not against the main statement of the Lord, but against what really is only a collateral and subordinate point in that statement; and I think that the effect of their so objecting, and carrying off the main stream of the argument of the chapter to that collateral and secondary point in it, has been to obscure the meaning of the Lord's chief statement, and cause the readers of this fifth chapter of St. John to attach but little signification to His great saying, "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

To this saying, therefore, its meaning, and the practical applications that belong to it, I wish now to confine attention, putting out of sight for the present the subordinate, however important fact, that the mode of expression does really convey the strongest and most undoubted assertion of the entire equality of the Father and the Son.

The Jews were persecuting the Lord on account of the miracle performed on the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda on the

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Sabbath-day. Unable to deny the fact of the miracle, wrought as it was upon a man who for thirty-eight years had been known to all the people as a beggar always to be seen lying upon the brink of the pool, they fixed upon the incidental circumstance of its having been performed on the *Sabbath-day*, and vindicating this one law with a preposterous severity that was intended to make up for the laxity with which they disregarded many others, endeavoured to compass the Lord's death as *a breaker of the Sabbath*. To this unreasonable objection the Lord replies in the terms of the text, "My Father is working till now, and I am working," which words, according to the uniform interpretation of all the chief ancient Christian<sup>a</sup> writers, signify this:—'The work of the Father, which is also the work of the Son, doth not stop on the Sabbath-day. That joint-work, whereby all things are maintained, upheld, and preserved; that joint-work, without which, if it should be for a moment suspended, the whole frame

<sup>a</sup> See the chief Fathers quoted by Maldonatus *in loco*: see also the Catena Aurea.

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of the universe would fall to ruin, is continuous, unending, uniform. It knows no stop, no intermission. Ever, from the beginning to this moment, ever and for ever, the Father is working to sustain, to bless, to carry forward the onward course of the world which He has created. The Father is working, and I, the Son, am working,— whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. With unremitting, unbroken Providence, ever and for ever, God the Father and God the Son are, and have been, and will continue to be working the great work of upholding and governing all things.'

And here let me borrow an observation of St. Chrysostom's which is worth remembering. "When," he says, "the Lord would defend *the disciples* from condemnation on the ground of breaking the Sabbath, He quoted the instance of David, *their fellow servant*, 'Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred;' but when He defended Himself, He referred only to the Father, shewing His equality to the Father, and desiring to raise their minds

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from the earth, that they might no longer regard Him as a man under law, but as God, and Legislator<sup>b</sup>."

Thus, then, we are to understand the Lord's words in the text. He defends Himself for curing the impotent man at Bethesda, on the ground of the unremitting operation wherewith, ever and for ever, the Father and the Son, without let, or stop, or intermission, sustain and uphold the whole frame of being, material and immaterial, of body and spirit, in the whole creation.

And if we may venture, especially on this great Christian festival of Whit-Sunday, to add any words to this sacred saying of Christ, we may perhaps go on to say,—‘ So the Father worketh hitherto, ever and for ever, and the Son worketh, *and the Holy Ghost worketh*. With one will<sup>c</sup>, with one power, with uniform and unbroken opera-

<sup>b</sup> St. Chrysost. in Joann. Hom. xxxviii. vol. viii. 219, (slightly abridged).

<sup>c</sup> “The nature of God being one, there are not in God divers wills, although Godhead be in divers persons, because the power of willing is a natural, not a personal propriety.”—*Hooker, Eccl. Pol.*, v. 48. 9.

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tion, God in Three Persons, one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, worketh ever and for ever, necessarily, mightily, and lovingly, to maintain and uphold the wondrous universal work which He hath made.'

And here let me avail myself of another suggestive observation of one of the most distinguished Fathers of the ancient Church, St. Leo the Great<sup>a</sup>, who says that it arose from human sin that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity separately undertook the great work of the restoration of mankind to the favour of God and the happy estate from which they had fallen. It may perhaps be too bold to say that if man had not sinned and fallen the *unity of the Godhead alone* would have been made known to him; but it is most sure, according to this observation of St. Leo, that it was in direct consequence of man's sin and the necessity of restoration that the *Trinity of the Godhead* was revealed. God, who is naturally known to the reason of man as One, the single ultimate Cause and Author

<sup>a</sup> Serm. iii. de Pentecost.

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of all things, was known as One only to Adam, to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses,—may we not almost say to David, even though there be passages of the Psalms which, read by the light of after-revelation, seem to speak clearly of two Persons as equally entitled to the incommunicable name? But sin necessitated a Redeemer; and the gradual development of the scheme of redemption brought with it of necessity the gradual revelation of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. And in like manner the necessity of the sanctification of redeemed man, involving the necessity of the departure of Christ in the flesh, and the mission of the other Paraclete, brought with it of equal necessity the revelation of the Holy Ghost, the third co-equal Person in the eternal Godhead. So it was that the sin of man leading, in the mercy of God, to His gracious scheme of redemption and restoration, brought to light that great central doctrine of the whole Christian revelation, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. Thus God brought good from evil; and greater depths of Divine knowledge were opened

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to the Church of God, and through the Church to principalities and powers in heavenly places, in consequence of human loss and sin.

Correspondently with this gradual revelation of the nature of God, there have been three great ages, or stages if I may so call them, of man's knowledge of God and nearness to Him.

First was the age in which man knew God undivided and undistinguished in Person as in substance; the long age in which God was as one Person to His people; the age of the patriarchs and the prophets; the age in which Jehovah was the one worship of the people of His love.

Next, gradually prepared by intimations of prophecy, growing clearer and clearer as the time drew on, was the age of the manifestation of the Son, when from the date of the conception and nativity of Christ, God in the second holy Person, still One in substance, exhibited His distinguishable being, and His separate operations for the restoration of lost mankind.

Last, when the Son of God had gone

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away in the flesh, having completed all those acts for which He came into the world, and having sat down for ever on the right hand of God, He sent the Holy Ghost as on this day—God in the third holy Person, to dwell amongst and in the redeemed, and to bring them by holy inward sanctification to that personal holiness and likeness of Christ which is requisite in order to make their sacred calling and election sure unto salvation.

So, I say, the work of the three holy Persons was gradually wrought among men for their restoration from the ruinous effects of sin, and so was it gradually made known to men, that they might increase in Divine knowledge, and render intelligent gratitude and praise to Him who had thus unfolded His mighty Being to bring them back in love, faith, and repentance to His bosom.

But though thus working specially, and so to speak separately, in times and dates, yet did the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost work continuously, and always, ever in all past time, harmoniously, unitedly, without stop, or let, or intermission, or hin-

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drance, to create, to support, to sustain, to vivify, to bless the whole creation, visible and invisible, material and immaterial. How far separately, how far together, we know but little: yet we do know that it was by the agency of the Son that the worlds were created, and that the breath of life was imparted by the Holy Spirit of God to all animated things. The whole three sacred Persons, acting, as I said, together, yet no doubt according to the propriety of their eternally distinguished personal being, did work, in all previous time, to create and maintain in all its beauty, strength, and order, in all its harmonious variety and wonderful complexity, the whole frame of being that ever did or could exist.

And so, since the times when the separate being and agency of the three Persons have been made known to the Church of God, they work, with operation distinguished but united, continuous, unimpeded, uninterrupted, night and day, Sabbath-day and week-day, ever and for ever, in the natural world. The Father worketh hitherto, and the Son worketh; the Father and the Son

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work hitherto, and the Holy Ghost worketh. They uphold what at first they created. They—if it be right to speak in the plural number of Him who is in substance, power, and eternity one God—rule as they made the earth, the sky, the sea, the countless orbs of heaven whose light takes thousands of years to reach the earth, the highest intelligences of angels and men, and the lowest and most minute forms of animal life, which but for the utmost powers of the microscope would have been utterly invisible and unknown to man. All this, and infinitely more than we can say, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost worketh in the natural world, and worketh ever.

But the more particular and divine work for which the distinction of God in three Persons was made known to the Church, is the work of repairing the lost image of God in the children of Adam; the work of bringing men, by a gentle drawing of willing souls, from ruin in Adam to salvation in Christ. But for this need, and but for the love which desired to repair this need, the divine truth of God in three Per-

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sons had, in all probability, never been known.

And so, we may confidently affirm, that the working of the three Persons in this most sacred and loving work is not less sure, not less powerful, nor less Almighty, than in all those great natural works in which we know and admire the wonderful power and goodness of God, the Creator and preserver of the worlds.

All that power, and all those operations of power, separate as of the three Persons, united as of one God, work just as truly, as lovingly, and as mightily for the salvation of the single soul of each redeemed brother or sister in Christ, as they are recognised in the mighty motions of the heavens, or the unspeakably delicate organization of the anatomy of the minutest living thing, animal or plant, upon the earth. Just as lovingly and powerfully, but even more directly; for the Son of Man, who is now the same as the Eternal Son of God, sitteth at the Father's right hand to make continual intercession for His members still upon the earth; and the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter,

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dwelleth in the hearts of Christian men and women, those members of Christ, to teach them to pray those acceptable prayers which the Son will offer in His own prevailing Name.

But all those operations, and all the final issue and success of them, wait upon our own will. God draws us gently, sweetly, constantly; but He does not compel us. The working goes on without intermission, but we may, if we will, overrule, neglect, disappoint it. Each, I mean, may do so for himself. The general work will go on, no doubt, and multitudes *will* listen, as multitudes *have* listened, and are listening still; and so the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit will not be in vain, the "many mansions" of the heavenly kingdom will be filled with happy occupants; but we, each one for himself, may, if we will, frustrate all that gracious and loving working for ourselves if we persist in sin, and will not turn in penitence and faith to the God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, who yearns to save us.

The work of salvation is a separate work,

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and the question of salvation is a separate question for each single soul among us. No creed will save us, no Church will save us, no family will save us, no knowledge, no privileges, nor helps of any kind will save us,—no friends, nor teachers, nor parents. Precious as all these things are, they are precious as *helping* us to do that *for ourselves*, without which nothing is of any help or use to us, rendering ourselves up, I mean, to the sanctifying Spirit of God, and learning by His holy discipline within us, to believe in Christ, to obey His law, to turn from sin, and render our body and our soul a living sacrifice to God.

This, by God's grace, a Christian can do in any state, or station, or occupation in life, and on this all depends. Baptized into the Church of Christ and taught His will, the Holy Spirit of the Most High God is assuredly with him, near him, and in him, to turn him in faith and penitence to God, if he *will* be turned. Whether he sleeps in the night or wakes in the day, whether he is occupied with his secular business or on his knees in prayer, whe-

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ther he is alone or in company, the Holy Spirit of God is with him, near him, and in him, witnessing every thought and wish, altogether knowing his most secret purposes, much more entirely knowing and judging every movement of his heart and will than he can know and judge of them himself.

Most true, but at the same time both awful and comforting ! Awful, to think how holy and how all-seeing is that inward witness ; and comforting, to think that if we will give ourselves up to His obedience, we have a strength and a protection altogether divine actually within us. But it is most important that all should reflect very seriously how far and how really the work of sanctification, the work of repentance and real amendment of life, the work of holy prayer and faith under the blessed Spirit of God, is going on within them. Every day brings the end nearer. Every day makes the final condition less uncertain. Every means of grace, as, if well used it helps us well forward on our way to heaven and God, so if it be neglected, or still worse if it be mis-

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used, throws us back out of that road, and gives us fresh and heavier matter of repentance and remorse.

But meanwhile the truth remains. God the Father is working "hitherto," ever and for ever; and God the Son is working, and God the Holy Ghost is working, and the work is doing; the elect of God are listening, the number of the elect of God is being made up; the ambassadors of God are warning thoughtless men and women, and the various messengers of God are, day by day, summoning many of the thoughtless away from the trial of this life to the terrible alternative certainty of the next.

May God give us all His grace that we may not frustrate His loving will towards ourselves, but as He certainly, most certainly, desires our salvation, that we may not fail of making that will effectual by listening to His call, and yielding ourselves up, in body and soul, to be led into all holiness by His Blessed Spirit!

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## MONDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

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### THE SPIRIT MOVING ON THE WATERS.

“ **I**N the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” “ In the beginning,” that is, in the far-off ages of a measureless antiquity, before all limits of time, from all eternity, “ God created the heavens and the earth.” “ Created :”—then there was a state or condition of being in which the Godhead was sole, in which the heavens and the earth were not ; for “ creation” means “ production out of a previous nothingness and vacancy.” And yet this act of creation was “ in the beginning,” or “ from all eternity ;” so that so far as the words go we seem to have the eternity of matter asserted in the same breath with the assertion that it was produced by the Almighty out of a previous nothingness. To our human intelligences it

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is simply inconceivable how these two statements can co-exist. It is what we call a contradictory proposition. Its terms are mutually destructive of each other. They are, so far as we can understand, irreconcilable.

Thus, then, the Bible opens with a mystery. The very first words of Holy Scripture involve a statement which, so far as the words are concerned, certainly appears to be a contradiction. It is a somewhat startling fact, and we conceive that some space will be well spent in examining into the nature of this contrariety which appears upon the surface.

For first of all we notice that this contrariety is not an isolated specimen of its kind. It belongs to a peculiar description of "contradictions in terms" not unfrequent in Holy Scripture. And further, this kind of contradiction is one which by the nature of the case is to be expected when the nature and action of God is brought before us in a revelation which, while it proceeds from God, is expressed in the words of men.

God, and the actions of God, belong to a higher kind of existence than ours. But

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the words and language in which they are set forth in Scripture belong to and are based upon our human life, and on it alone. A little reflection will shew that if we attempt to describe the ideas which belong to that higher sphere of existence by means of words belonging to our lower level of existence, some contradictions, *so far as the words go*, are to be expected and allowed for.

Does not our own life and experience teach us this? Our own present being embraces, as we may say, specimens of more than one such level or sphere of life and action. There is, first, our physical or bodily life; the existence of sense, and sight, and feeling. There is, next, the life of the affections, the existence in which we live the life of hope, and love, and fear, and anger, and the like. These are two separate levels of existence, and we exist on both. There is, again, another level of existence which is also ours; there is the spiritual life, with all its higher powers, its intuitions and perceptions, its capacity of spiritual influences, of Divine communion.

Now it is very remarkable that while each

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of these separate descriptions of existence co-exist in all of us, yet on the whole the words and terms in ordinary use among mankind belong, almost all of them, originally to the things we see, and feel, and hear. A considerable proportion is contributed by the world of the feelings and affections ; but few, if any, belong originally to the higher or the spiritual life. In their primary signification the great bulk of our words and terms belong to things which we are conversant with upon the lowest level of our existence, and upon that alone.

What follows then ? Plainly this, that if we *limited* our words to their primary signification and use, to the meaning, that is, which they had in the outward world of sense and sight, we should either have no words at all for higher things, or else the greater part of our language respecting higher things would be simply fallacious and misleading. We *transfer* words from purely bodily and outward objects to things moral, things spiritual. We remove words from their old *limited* meanings, and use them in a larger and a more expanded sense

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with respect to our higher life and being—borrowing words, as we might say, from the world of our bodily life to serve for something analogous or similar in the higher spheres of our existence.

Thus much may serve to explain what we meant when we said at the outset that there is necessarily a *class* of contrarieties, so far as mere words go, when words based upon human experience and human ideas are employed to express ideas regarding the nature and action of the Most High. Holy Scripture is written in human language. The revelation in Holy Scripture is a revelation of the Divine nature and character; a nature on a level above our own, although not so remote but that mutual communion is possible. Still the mere fact of its being upon a higher level *must* render human words inadequate, *upon their own former level of meaning*, to the full expression of the new ideas to be conveyed. We must expect difficulties, apparent contrarieties, even occasional contradictions in terms. No reasonable man could expect anything else. What then are we to conclude? Is Scrip-

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ture to be unintelligible? Is its revelation of God's nature and action to be merely nugatory, a blank and nothing more? By no means. All that we mean to insist upon is this, that where difficulties arise from statements which seem to involve a contrariety, we are bound as reasonable men to act upon what we *can* understand, undisturbed by the mental puzzle which the words themselves present.

II. Again, Holy Scripture is not only the revelation of a nature higher than our own, but it reveals that nature to us for a distinct and practical purpose:—the elevation, that is, of our own nature also. Holy Scripture leads us to think of God, to obey God, and to worship God in the highest and best way of which our nature *in its present condition* is capable. It expressly informs us that all this is with the ulterior view of lifting us also, our very selves and nature, into a future higher state of existence, an existence upon a higher level than we can at present entirely comprehend, and in which we shall be capable of a corresponding extension of perception and knowledge. Moreover the

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chief means to this future exaltation, is present communion with, and contemplation of, the Divine nature as revealed in Holy Scripture.

For it is by habits formed and fostered *now* that we are to be prepared for that exaltation *then* :—habits of life, habits of thought, and we believe very chiefly indeed, those habits of worship and divine contemplation, which go so far in moulding and fashioning life and thought. The God of the Bible is pre-eminently a God to be adored and contemplated, to be worshipped, loved, obeyed. But all this not so much with a view to any glory reaped by Him now, from our present worship, as to His glory in that future advancement of our nature which shall result from our obedience and loving adoration. Hence, therefore, a Christian is in no practical difficulty when he encounters statements which seem (*so far as mere human words go*) to contradict and exclude one another regarding the nature of his God. He knows the difference between a lower and a higher level of existence. He looks forward to his own personal

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elevation in the scale of being as the goal of his existence. He knows that truths respecting a higher existence can only be imperfectly expressed in the words of a lower, and he waits patiently for the fuller comprehension which shall supersede his present dilemma and embarrassment.

And then, thirdly, wherever the difficulty lies not merely in a single statement, but in some characteristic feature running through all Scripture, we are bound to regard it as the reflection in a mirror darkly<sup>\*</sup> of something very deep indeed, of something peculiarly essential to the Divine nature, which is thus revealed for our contemplation and adoration. It is a most fatal mistake to imagine that the deeper mysteries of God's revealed nature are something too remote to affect us and our destinies. The case is just the opposite. The deeper the mystery the more essential is the verity; and the more nearly and intimately does it concern ourselves now and for all eternity. Doubtless the future of mankind is wrapped in a darkness which

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

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Holy Scripture does marvellously little to dispel or to illuminate, but if it be permitted us to form any conjecture respecting the *degrees* of glory which await "the sons of God" <sup>b</sup> we should speak as follows. That "glory" must consist in the nearness which each several soul has won to the Divine image. In the *degree* of that nearness lies the degree of the glory, i.e. of the elevation of our nature which is the object of all revelation. Contemplation, as well as faithful action and obedience, has its place and part in the development of the regenerate nature which *is* the Divine image in our present limited existence. We *know* that devout contemplation *has* a direct action and effect upon our nature and our character: contemplation, we mean, of that which is revealed to us of the Divine nature, the Divine attributes, the Divine action. It has a developing agency, an agency by which that process of transfiguration and enfranchisement which we look for in our glorified condition is begun upon our inner nature now. We cannot place ourselves within the glow and

<sup>b</sup> St. John i. 12; Rom. viii. 19.

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warmth of the Sun of Righteousness without a quickening influence taking its effect upon the Divine germ which we bear within us. We may not *see*, or even *feel*, the action of the heavenly beams which radiate from the central Sun. We may not be able to trace and register their gradual operation. They who are most influenced will often be the most unconscious. But it works. It changes us “into the same image.” In the “new heavens and the new earth,” it will be seen how large a part of that renewing by the Holy Ghost which shall have brought many very near to the Throne has been carried out through their reverent contemplation of the revealed nature of the Most High under the words and terms of our Scripture revelation.

And if all this be so, then of what an unspeakable importance is it that we dwell upon and realize all that Holy Scripture *does* present to our reverent gaze of the nature and the action of the Highest?—not merely the manifest and obvious properties and attributes of the Godhead, not merely those

• 2 Cor. iii. 18.

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which bard and sage, aye or even the husbandman and tiller of the ground, could gather from the witness of natural religion ; but, if we may be permitted such boldness of speech, especially and above all, those mysteries of His nature which in hints and glimpses, constantly repeated, from the first to the last, are continually breaking through the clouds and giving us some insight into the mind of the Eternal ?

If, as we have said, this “ beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord ” has its distinct operation and effect in the renewal of the human soul, then of what unspeakable importance is it that we fix *rightly* the object of our adoration : neither adding to nor subtracting from the statements which Holy Scripture has vouchsafed for our instruction ; taking in all, whether they seem to clash or not ; accepting all in the proportion also and in the mutual perspective in which they are placed. Right thinking about God :— careful, prayerful effort that we may be enabled to realize every lineament in the Divine portraiture of His ways and of His character, that setting Him ever before us as He

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has revealed Himself, we may have the better hope of being renewed more and more, each in his several measure, as children of God. No doubt there must be many whose calling would seem to be that of the servants in the parable, and whose probation would seem to turn *chiefly* upon the fidelity of their obedience; but for those others, and they too are many, for those whose calling seems to lie in the region of the higher moral and spiritual being, students of Scripture, and scribes instructed unto the kingdom of God, for those indeed we seem to hear a peculiar warning in the Church's solemn cry, "He therefore that will be saved must *thus* think of the Trinity :"—THUS—though every clause and statement in that mysterious Creed is set in curious equipoise against some balanced counter-statement: THUS—not as an arbitrary demand from God merely to try and test our intellectual submission, but because of an inherent fitness and necessity whereby God is a law unto Himself before He is a law unto us: THUS—because the being "saved" means nothing else than the completion of our renewal in our Maker's image,

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and how shall that image be renewed in us unless it is kept before us in all the fulness, though it may be also in all the inconceivableness<sup>a</sup>, with which it is set forth in Holy Scripture? We said by an inherent fitness and necessity, and we said it advisedly. Why has God revealed His nature to us at all? Is it not in order that we may have clear, albeit perhaps conflicting, notions respecting Him whom we worship, and that thus a corresponding stamp may be set upon our souls, especially in the impressionable hours of humble access and adoring prayer? To omit any one revealed truth respecting the nature of God is to sin against our own souls, to deprive ourselves of the benefit and blessing which God has provided for us in giving us this one trait more of the Divine character to look upon when we set Him before us as our Father and our Almighty aid. To worship an unknown

<sup>a</sup> Remember that the word “incomprehensible” in the Athanasian Creed means that which cannot be limited or included in or by any notions or explanations of ours—incapable of being grasped by reason of its boundlessness.

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God is all one with worshipping no God at all. To have wrong ideas of God is all one with setting up a different God to worship than the God of the Bible, and one of the sternest denunciations of sacred Scripture is of the man who frames unworthy thoughts of God,—“Thou thoughtest wickedly that I am even such a one as thyself. . . . O consider this, ye that *forget* God: lest I pluck you away and there be none to deliver you.”

IV. And therefore it is peculiarly interesting to observe that whatever mysteries encompass the Scriptural revelation of the nature of Almighty God to us *now*, the self-same mysteries accompanied it *from the very first*. It is true that we have clearer light respecting God’s *dealings* with mankind, but it has always been one and the same conception of the Divine *nature* which has been offered to the human worshipper. Go up to the fountain-head,—to these early chapters of the Book of Genesis,—and trace the course of revelation downwards. So far as God’s government of His human creation is concerned, we gain an ever-increasing store of

\* Ps. 1, 21, 22.

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historical examples from which to learn its methods and to understand its action. But as regards the central mystery of all, the mystery of the sacred Trinity, and a certain partition of offices among the three Persons of the One God, revelation advances not so much by *adding* fresh truths as by *developing* the primal thought. It has been one and the same mystery from the first. Far off into the infinite eternity, we read of the One God in His act of creation, but the next verse carries us onward to the commencement of our own era of this planet's history, and *immediately* we have the revelation of God the Holy Spirit in the self-same aspect as that of the Nicene Creed, and of the New Testament Epistles. Creation was one thing, the organization of this earth as the theatre of life was another, and an infinitely subsequent, performance. We know nothing<sup>1</sup> of the boundless series of ages

' We say here "we know nothing," because nothing is explicitly and categorically revealed; but there are many hints and allusions scattered up and down the Old Testament Scriptures which lead to the supposition that the fall of the rebel angels under "Satan" may

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which elapsed between the infinitely distant “beginning” when “God” created the material universe — “the heavens and the earth”—or how it came to pass that God’s world was lying formless and void, dark in its chaotic ruin, destitute alike of light and life, so far as this our planet was concerned. But so it was. We only know that whereas the creation itself was at an indefinite distance in the past, a thing accomplished by the act of God, the organization of the formless mass was initiated, to say the least, by the action not of God the Father, or of God the Son, not of God regarded in the Unity of the Three Persons, but by the operation of the

not have been unconnected with this state of *darkness*, ruin, and chaos. The phrase “without form and void” occurs in two other places in the Old Testament, and in only two, (Isaiah xxxiv. 11, and Jeremiah iv. 23,) and in *both* it describes a state of destruction and ruin of what had previously been very different. Now destruction or ruin presupposes the idea of a destroyer. Moreover, *this* state of ruin was one of *darkness* so far as this planet was concerned, and the fall of Satan is always described as the fall of the angel of light. But we cannot pursue this subject further in a note, than to indicate some probable opinions as to the interval between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis i.

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Holy Ghost as a Person, the same in the Divinity of His essence, distinct in the Personality of His existence. As soon as the earth is to be prepared as the abode of that graduated series of living creatures leading up to man, so soon the unity begins to unfold itself towards the idea of the Trinity, that moment God the Holy Ghost is brought before us. And not this only, for herein we also see the germ of all that since has been unfolded of the special department of the Spirit in the dealings of the Godhead with the race of man. That the operation of the Spirit has a peculiar department is at once apparent from the Scripture record. It is not creation. That is over. The first verse dates that back beyond all human ken. It was truly and literally pre-historic. Not so the Spirit's action. That was the Divine preliminary to two distinct results, life and order—life and organization—the organization of *existing* matter. And *this* took place in time. It was historic. Life and order, in the present state of our planet, date from the hour when “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The

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previously existing chaos yields to the controlling, ordering, life-giving Power of whom it is elsewhere written, “When Thou lettest Thy breath [Spirit] go forth they shall be made: and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth<sup>s</sup>. ” For we would insist yet again that the whole history of the six days’ work bears the character of an arranging (may we not almost say *re-arranging*) of a planet fallen (we are not clearly told how or why) into a night of ruin, of confusion. Bear in mind that the word, the peculiar word, “created” or “creation,” does not recur again through all the history until we come to ver. 27, where, after the completion of the human image, the word “created” is now *thrice* repeated with a solemn emphasis<sup>h</sup>.

<sup>s</sup> Ps. civ. 30.

<sup>h</sup> There is one exception to this, where the “great whales” are said to have been “created” in verse 21. But we think this exceptional use of the expression is merely an exception, and is accounted for by reference to the peculiar awe with which the “leviathan” (see Job xli.) was regarded as God’s mightiest work in the animal creation. The word here is the same with that translated ‘leviathan’ in Job xli., and ‘dragon’ in Ezekiel xxix. 3.

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It is as if there was settled purpose to call our attention to the fact that although man in his merely bodily and visible nature is “formed of the dust of the ground,” and therefore not “created” in reference to his merely corporal structure, yet man in his completed being, man in his threefold completeness, man as God’s image, *is* a different work from any which had gone before since the Spirit’s “moving upon the face of the waters;”—a work of true “creation;”—an absolutely new order of Being. An expression of Divine self-communion precedes it. The *triple* affirmation ends it. It has been an act of Divine creation. That which makes man **MAN**, and not a higher kind of animal; **MAN**, and not merely the highest of those creatures of which God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature<sup>1</sup>;” that which makes us what we are, is that act of Divine creation by which a new being, different in kind from all before, now stood upon the earth to have dominion over all the living beings which, in obedience to God’s word, the earth and waters had “brought

<sup>1</sup> Gen. i. 24.

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forth abundantly." But for all which went *between*, for all which preceded the word of Divine self-communion, "Let us make man," it would seem that the organization of existing materials, and the gift of life to newly formed organizations, is the subject of the history. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Order took the place of chaos, and light prevailed against darkness. Life swarmed in sea and air, and everywhere. A planet which had been a wreck and chaos became the beauteous home of all things fair and orderly, and God approved the work, and "saw that it was good." Once more. There is a word occurring in Gen. ii. 1, where the result of the six days' labour is described, which we cannot forbear to notice as we pass. The verse runs as follows, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the *host* of them<sup>k</sup>." Now it is the *order*, the *arrangement*, to which our attention is called in this concluding summary of the six days' work. "Host" signifies "order." The

<sup>k</sup> "Host or army, because of their vast variety and excellent *order*." Patrick's note on the verse.

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Greek version translates it by “cosmos.” All the “order,” or “ordering,” of them is the idea which is in view, the “cosmos” taking the place of “chaos:” for order is ever the characteristic of the Spirit’s work, even as when St. Paul, discoursing of the legitimate exercise of *spiritual* gifts, writes, “God is not the author of confusion,” and “Let everything in the church be done in order<sup>1</sup>. ”

It is clear therefore, we think, that in this history of the preparation of the earth for man’s abode and habitation we see the work of the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, a regeneration and a renewal at some date infinitely subsequent to that of primary creation, a restoration of life and order following a period of wreck and overthrow during which life was not. It is *the* characteristic which Holy Scripture ever brings before us of the Spirit’s office in the universe of God. “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life,” is our Nicene profession. We believe it in the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.

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sphere of our own spiritual being, in the region of our moral energies and our religious life, but in truth we should admit it as the universal attribute of the Third Person of the sacred Three:—He is in every region of God's universe the one pre-eminent and peculiar “Giver of life.” Only at the close of the six days' re-organizing labour do we seem to come upon a new and separate act of creation: an act whereby, as we may say, a new element was introduced upon the now reconstituted earth,—the creation of man. Up to this point it would seem it was only the ancient elements lying waste and void which were quickened into life, and arranged after their kind. But now not one, but all the Persons of the Godhead concur in the perfecting of a new creation, a Being including the characteristic perfections of the previous works, but in His essence a *new being*, a new creation, the image of God.

It is thus then that in the first pages of the history of revelation we behold in actual operation that peculiar distinction of person, and consequent distribution of

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office, which is the crowning mystery of the Godhead. Every human way of expressing it in words must involve a verbal self-contradiction. That sublime confession of faith which we recite on all festivals connected with the Divine nature and offices from Christmas to Trinity, is but the completest form in which Scripture truth in all its supernatural freedom is summed up and propounded for our acceptance. Many turn from it as though it were merely the production of human skill and verbal subtleties of combination and distinction, and yet from first to last in Holy Scripture, alike in the material and spiritual "cosmos" we trace the stamp and impress of those mysterious *partitions* of Divine government and operation which issue from the essential Trinity of the Divine nature in its eternal permanence. The very history which we have sketched out of the physical world wherein we live is but a parable, a rehearsal beforehand, a material model, if we may so express it, of the Divine work of the reconstitution of humanity which we sum up in one word as the work of redemption. As the sculptor

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sets up his model in the clay or plaster before he proceeds to the enduring work in marble or perennial bronze, so (we say it with all reverence) may we contemplate the several works of the ever-blessed Trinity in redemption, as modelled beforehand in this re-constitution of the earthly cosmos. The earthly cosmos shall perish, but the spiritual restoration of mankind shall endure for ever when its earthly pattern shall have passed away like a scroll.

Consider the course of our new creation under the economy of grace now in process. Is it not in some degree explained and illustrated by the thoughts of the Divine nature, which have been suggested by this review of the six days of the material cosmos? We live under the dispensation of the Spirit, the Spirit *not* the Creator but the *Life-giver*, the *Distributor* of divine gifts, the organizing, the ordering Spirit of God. Does not the foregoing review give us a more real perception that the "departure" of Christ the *Author* of our new creation is owing to some essential necessity arising out of the nature of the Godhead?—that He *must* leave His

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work to be carried out to its completion by the organizing and informing Spirit? We are new-created;—every Christian is new-created as a member of Christ's Body;—the Christian Church as the Body of Christ *is* the creation of Christ;—but it lay formless, void, unorganized, until at Pentecost the Spirit of God moved upon its face, and ever since that hour the work of reconstruction has been proceeding under the formative, quickening, organizing power of Him who took up the work where Christ the New-Creator laid it down. The tone of the New Testament cannot be mistaken. It is not the Spirit that initiates, but it is the Spirit who administers. “He shall *take of Mine*” is the word of Christ, “He shall *not speak of Himself*.” It would take us long to point out completely how throughout the New Testament it is always the Spirit Who organizes the mystical Body. Is there a new Apostle to be added to the sacred band? a new enterprize to be undertaken whereby a new growth shall be added to the Body of Christ? It is the “Holy Ghost” who “said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for

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the work whereunto I have called them<sup>m</sup>." Are the varied powers and energies in question?—those supernatural stirrings of life by which in its early stages the Church put forth her branches, and grew into her full proportions with such astounding rapidity?—"All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing unto every man severally as He will<sup>n</sup>."

What do these and all the multitude of like passages indicate but that the spiritual cosmos is the work of Him by whom the material cosmos was quickened and ordered, that there is a Divine uniformity in all the works of the sacred Trinity from first to last, whether in the economy of grace or in the order of what we call nature?

Space only limits us, or we would gladly dwell upon the many practical suggestions which such thoughts raise. For one or two we must find room. And first, the deepened reverence which they arouse for all that concerns or contributes to the edification or extension of the Church of Christ. There is nothing which enhances our respect for any

<sup>m</sup> Acts xiii. 2.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 11.

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person or for any institution so much as the consideration that he or it is not an isolated agent or instrument, working exceptionally or alone for the object in view, but a portion of a vast system, the channel of communication from an interior reserved fund of power, the visible outcome of some invisible agency behind. Again, there is nothing which increases our reverence for individual statements of individual truths so much as the discovery that they are really parts and portions of a vast continent of truth, peering up above the surface of the deep as a group of wave-washed islets are really but the top-most peaks of a submerged but real continent below.

Such is the case with all the scattered hints and statements respecting the varied agencies and powers in the Christian Church. The inspiration of Holy Scripture, here and there *alluded* to and asserted rather than defined and expounded in the sacred writings, is one of these. The grace of Sacraments is another. The ministry of the Church is a third. It was not of the elders of the Church of Ephesus alone, as a mere isolated fact, that

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it was said that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers to feed the Church of God<sup>o</sup>. Of all these it may be said, "These all worketh that one and the self-same Spirit." All the visible powers of life and growth, all energies for edification, for organization, for extension, are but the visible portions of the vast underlying spiritual agency slowly, gradually, and noiselessly bringing to its perfection the new creation of the Son of God, the Church of the redeemed. May we not look onward to the end? A time shall come when the antitype of the material cosmos shall be completed, and the new heavens and the new earth (whatever those words may designate) shall be prepared, when *this work* also of the Holy Ghost shall have its end, when Christ shall give up His kingdom to the Father, and then **MAN** in the newly-perfected image of God shall occupy the better Eden, and behold with open face the Glory of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

° Acts xx. 28.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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TUESDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

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## THE SPIRIT STRIVING WITH MAN BEFORE THE FLOOD.

THE antediluvian world, the world in which Adam lived and saw his remote posterity for a period as long as from the days of St. Dunstan to those of Archbishop Longley, the world in which Enoch walked with God, and the Cainites advanced in arts and manufactures, the world too in which angelic existences intermingled with the fortunes of its human members,—how shadowy and intangible does it not seem to most of us, how remote from human interests and sympathies ! how hard to realize that it was a world of men and women under a like probation to our own, controlled by the same Providence, tempted by the same tempters, tending to the like everlasting destiny of weal or woe ! And yet it must have been so.

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Some particular *items* in their circumstances differed doubtless from those around ourselves; even as in the present day the moral probation of man is carried on under widely different conditions in the yet unopened centre of China and the progressive populations of Anglo-Saxon cities. But *in the main*, in all that constitutes human nature and human trial, in the *nature* of the human heart, in the *nature* of the operation of God and of the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man, the identity must be complete. Our Lord draws warning and example from it, the New Testament Epistles appeal to it in illustration of God's judgments. Let us try in the present paper to realize some of the conditions under which the men of the old world lived and worshipped, served God, were tempted, sinned, and at last were swept away.

And herein first let us observe, that whether we are to consider the history as in all points given to us by direct Divine *revelation*, or as collected and preserved under Divine *inspiration* from earlier documents or existing traditions, matters very little. In the first place we accept the Hebrew chronology,

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and with this as our basis it is hard to see how the knowledge of the leading features of antediluvian history *could* have died away when Moses wrote. Noah himself had been for six hundred years the contemporary witness of its great events, and Noah *survived the flood* three hundred and fifty years. Abraham was born but two years (according to Archbishop Usher's Chronology<sup>a</sup>) after Noah's decease, so that all who were men prior to Abraham's birth were contemporary with one whose own lips would convey the testimony of actual personal knowledge of six hundred years of antediluvian life to every one around him.

When we consider the permanence of traditional knowledge among the Oriental races which is their great characteristic even to the present day, it becomes difficult to understand how a seriously erroneous tradition *could* have grown up within the circle of

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Greswell has recently shewn such strong reasons for adhering to the date 4004 B.C. for the creation of man, that we consider no apology necessary for abiding by it as our basis. See Greswell's "Threefold Cord." (Rivingtons. 1862.)

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Noah's immediate influence, within which we must conceive the Abrahamic line to have remained. With respect to the children of the various dispersions, all this would doubtless be greatly modified; but the family likeness which prevails throughout the legendary lore of every race under heaven touching some primeval condition of their distant ancestry bears witness to a unity of source for *all* the now infinitely varied streams of story. In the Abrahamic line, the pure stream flowed with hardly any scope for adulterating the original Noachian narrative.

Now in putting together all the not very numerous hints and statements which we find respecting the state of man before the flood, we are led to one very marked conclusion. Whatever may have been the "progress" of the race as regards those arts and sciences in which modern civilization abounds, we cannot avoid the impression that one of the threefold divisions of our human nature *must*, in that now departed era, have existed in a somewhat higher, intenser, and more vigorous state of development, and that this being so, the

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other peculiarities which mark the Scripture record of that age flowed from it as a consequence. Man is a compound being :— body, soul, spirit, all these three meet in his personality. We cannot but conceive that prior to the great overthrow, the spiritual faculty was more keen, more vivid, that it held greater predominance over the whole compound nature. Not that man was thereby better, but that he was at once capable of greater intensity of good and of greater intensity of evil; capable of nearer communion with God, capable of deeper spiritual alienation from Him; more open to spiritual influences for good or for evil. Moreover, there are plain indications of some more direct access given to some manifestation of the actual Presence of God. Taking the word “heroic” in this sense, it *was* the heroic age of man. It was an age when the presence of God was in some mysterious way more openly vouchsafed, personal communion and communication more manifestly afforded, and the way of access between man and superior Intelligences more open than it has been since.

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We conceive that the decree of the Almighty by which He closed this primal epoch in the history of the human race points clearly to such a conclusion, and that the circumstances which led to this decree seem to point to it also. And, moreover, we think that on this supposition, other circumstances also in the sacred history, both before and after, will become more intelligible, and thereby confirm its soundness.

To begin then. The decree which preceded the destruction of the human race (all save the family of Noah) was as follows: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he *also* is flesh." Here our word 'strive' is an inadequate rendering of the original. It would be nearer to the accurate meaning to have translated it, "My Spirit shall not go on to *abide* in, or to *prevail* in, or to *preside* in, man, seeing that he is *also* flesh<sup>b</sup>." It is a sentence of withdrawal of a large amount (to speak popularly) of spiritual force from the compound being of man. God had seen that men were

<sup>b</sup> The Vulgate has "non permanebit;" the LXX οὐ μὴ καταμείνῃ.

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growing more and more fleshly, yielding more and more to the fleshly element in the compound nature. He decrees that there shall be a diminished energy of the spiritual force, partly it may be in punishment, partly also in mercy, as diminishing the capacity for sin by reducing the scale of man's vital energies while he remains in his present nature thus compounded of flesh and spirit. "Seeing that he is *also* flesh," and that he has shewn himself bent on serving the flesh, God withdraws a large proportion of His Spirit. Henceforward man's life on earth is shortened. What does this mean but that the spiritual and the bodily portions of our nature shall be separated at an earlier period than they used to be? that man *as made up of "flesh and spirit"* shall sooner cease to exist? But how? "*My Spirit,*" says the Almighty, "shall not continue to prevail or abide in" man "who is but flesh." Why does God say "*My Spirit?*" Because the spiritual part of man can only retain its energies by the co-operation of the Divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Giver of life. God is the sustainer as well as the Creator.

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Withdraw the support, diminish the flow of energy from the Divine source, and a diminished scale of vitality must follow. Thus the Divine sentence expresses a diminution of the vital energy of the spiritual part in man, which has its outward manifestation in the earlier dissolution of the human frame. For, notice next that the sentence does not, so far as we are informed, take effect on those born prior to the flood. Noah survives the flood three hundred and fifty years. Shem, we are expressly told, survived it five hundred years. It was only (so far as we are told) in the persons of those who came in under the new conditions that the altered law prevails. And this also will in some degree explain the flood itself, and the extirpation of the race whose powers of evil had been so great as to have reached the height of wickedness of which their more largely developed spiritual faculties rendered them capable. It was necessary in God's sight to purge the earth of them and their pollution, to purge it of a race who otherwise might have continued long enough upon the earth to have corrupted whole

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generations of short-lived posterity, even as Noah and Shem survived as witnesses for God far into what becomes for us almost a historic period.

But now after having explained the words of this Divine decree, we must begin to turn backward. What was it that led to it? What was its *immediate* cause? It is the second verse of the sixth chapter of Genesis which tells us;—the fact stated in the *second* verse, taken in connection with its consequences as related in verses *four* and *five*. And here upon this second verse we must pause for one remark. All fair interpretation seems to place us under the necessity of explaining the words “sons of God” in the second verse as designating angels; beings superhuman—angelic. The Septuagint translates the words as “angels,” and the original words when they recur in other parts of Scripture<sup>c</sup> are clearly meant of *angels*. But these are not the angels of the rebel race which fell away under the great defection headed by the angel who yet remains the

<sup>c</sup> See Job i. 6, ii. 1, xxxviii. 7; Ps. xxix. 1, lxxxix. 6.

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tempter and the accuser; not the angels who constitute the host of him who tempted our Lord in the desert, and who shall hereafter be cast into the lake of fire; but another and a separate race, hitherto unfallen, and who after this offence were bound and *not* left at liberty to renew their sin or their temptation. Those angels, we conceive, of whom we read in St. Jude, "which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," whom "He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day<sup>d</sup>."

It was of *these* angels, in like manner, that St. Peter also wrote when he says that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly<sup>e</sup>." And so it was after the descent of these angels that the supreme development of evil took effect which is described with such a reiteration

<sup>d</sup> St. Jude 6.

• 2 St. Pet. ii. 4, 5.

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of emphasis in this chapter of Genesis, when “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that all the purposes and desires [margin] of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them from [margin] the earth !”

It is to this period of surpassing wickedness that the age of giants belongs, the memory of which is perpetuated also in the classic legends of the giants, children of Cœlus and Terra, reflecting plainly this scriptural narrative of the descent of the angels, and the might and violence of those who became “mighty men of old, men of renown.”

Thus, then, it would seem that the old world ran its course to this pitch of wicked-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vi. 5, 11—13.

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ness ; and we may not irreverently conjecture that there was a mercy in limiting alike man's years of life, and the vital energies of his spiritual nature, which had been capable of such an utter rebellion against God. The evil of the Fall would seem to have now worked out its deadly mischief to a degree hitherto unparalleled. Man was now not merely fallen, but something worse. He was *beginning*, at the least, to partake in that actual *hostility to God* which we conceive to be the final condition of hopeless spiritual sin. So man's *nature* must be *pruned*, cut down, so to speak, to a somewhat lower level. If the race is to be restored it must be by educating it up again from a lower level, even as there are diseases which require the system to be *lowered* before the restorative treatment can be commenced.

So the antediluvian era closes, and a new dispensation is begun.

The whole history of God's gradual revelation of Himself, and ever-increasing gifts of grace, and bestowal of His Spirit, after this awful close of the primæval dispen-

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sation, assumes a fresh character of mysterious interest viewed in this light. But the interest is deep and manifold. First, there is a period during which the human race seems almost to lie fallow before the spiritual husbandry shall recommence. The long delay before the choice of the founder of the race which should be the new witness for God upon the earth,—long, but yet *no longer than* the life of Noah,—strikes us greatly. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, survives as a witness for God until close before the birth of Abraham, and during all this period there is no hint of any spiritual re-awakening on the part of man, any new manifestation of Himself on the part of God. The life of Shem must have been largely contemporaneous with that of the great patriarch, reaching, it may be, even to the sacrifice of Isaac. The memory of the great overthrow of the wicked race *must* have been the dark background against which the father of the faithful saw in brightening contrast the glorious hopes of man revealed in the future of his own posterity. The memory also of the nearer communion with God which cha-

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racterized the elder world must have interpreted to Abraham his own distinguished place as favoured with the recommencement of direct Divine communion and converse. Until Abraham we read of none. In the history of Abraham we appear to have a beginning of the return of some special Divine Presence to the earth : a beginning which was to go on increasing continually until once more it should be a universal possession. A small beginning at first, for to Abraham it was personal and individual, by Divine gift and special selection. An increasing gift, for it was to belong by covenant to *all his posterity* in the chosen seed of Isaac. A universal gift, at last, since ultimately it was once more to extend to all nations, and restore mankind to their lost position before God.

Now we cannot but feel that the new gift thus commencing in Abraham was the restoration in a new and more glorious sense of a *deprivation* which may have commenced at the time of the Fall, but which was *finally consummated* in the decree which went before the flood, and in the flood as the exe-

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cution of that decree. There are plain indications that prior to the flood the Presence had not been utterly withdrawn. Fallen as the race of Adam was, still by sacrifice man approached a special "Presence." Witness Cain's horror that by his special punishment he was to be driven forth from this "Presence." It is clear that he regarded life as insupportable without it. "From Thy Presence I shall be hid<sup>s</sup>." The great horror which evidently seized the murderer's mind was that he would be "a fugitive and a vagabond," banished from *the Presence*; the Presence which since Adam fell was yet vouchsafed, still given, most probably in a visible manifestation and a specific locality, and which mankind might still approach by the appointed way of sacrifice.

*After* the deluge this, too, was changed. Not only was man spiritually on a lower level, but his spiritual privileges, so fearfully abused, were lowered. The Presence was awhile diminished if not withdrawn. Yet men clung to their traditional knowledge of It, and of Its original locality. This explains

<sup>s</sup> Gen. iv. 14.

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God's special interference to disperse mankind. This explains the purpose with which men sought to build that tower whose top was to reach to heaven. Men dreaded *dispersion*. Even Cain, when driven out, would settle as near as he could to the region of the Presence. So in after times the progeny of Noah clung to the old traditional locality, however much the Presence may have been withdrawn or diminished in the region of its former seat. They dreaded dispersion from the seat of the former Presence. When they moved from the East<sup>h</sup> they clung together. And then we come to that verse which tells of the building of the tower, where the old Jewish reading of the word *god* for *name* seems so fully to explain the meaning of the undertaking. "They said, Let us build . . . a tower . . . and let us make us a god," (Eng. Vers., "a name"). This is surely very suggestive. It was their anxiety to recover the Presence as the centre of unity and the safeguard of the race of man. "Let us make us a god." Why? "Lest we be scattered abroad over the face

<sup>h</sup> Gen. xi. 2.

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of the whole earth." Remembering the *ancient* Presence, and feeling the want of It, they set about supplying that want in their own way. It is the idolatrous principle in its first manifestation. The original Presence is no more. A factitious one must be supplied, just as afterwards among the Jews when they said to Aaron, "*Make* us gods which shall go before us."

For observe in reference to this matter, that before the flood we have no hint whatever of any idolatrous tendency. There were sins enough, but not this particular sin. The Presence protected them from that. And it is moreover specially noticeable how very gradually and incidentally the notices of idols and of idol-worship creep into the Scripture history; as if idolatry itself were only growing slowly into a system, and only gradually developing its later fruits of evil. Idolatry was not an *early* sin of the human race. The early sins were of a deeper, an intenser, a more deadly character. The passages above cited from St. Peter and St. Jude point out plainly what they were, agreeing exactly with this sixth chapter of Genesis. The old

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sins of the human race were more *diabolical*:—"rebellion, *which is as the sin of witchcraft*,"—i.e. a sin of the nature of commerce with the evil one:—rebellion and outrageous unbridled licentiousness. Idolatry was a sin of a lower order, a sin of minds upon a lower level, of minds, too, which (as in post-diluvian times) began to feel the loss of the Presence which had been withdrawn, which began to feel the want of some sensible object of worship. Thus idolatry commenced; and thus idols first represented, and afterwards, among a gross and carnal race, supplanted, the true God, whom men began to know the want of when His Presence was withdrawn. May not this illustrate the celebrated maxim of the first Napoleon, "If God had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent Him?"

The same thought, that of a distinct withdrawal of a Presence corresponding to some lowering of the spiritual element in man after the flood, is very strongly suggested by the contrast between the language used respecting God at the time of the building of this tower and before the flood. All through the

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antediluvian period God speaks and is spoken of as One Present. Whether in anger or in peace His words are those of One, so to speak, upon the spot. It is so now no longer. On the contrary, it is *now*, “The Lord *came down to see* the city and the tower. .... And the Lord said, .... Go to, let us *go down*, and there confound their language<sup>1</sup>. ” Everything points not only to a lower degree of spiritual life on the part of man, but also to a corresponding withdrawal of His Presence on the part of God until a new race should be raised up, who should be better fitted for His gracious manifestations. The very first great scene depicted after the flood seems to point to this. God accepts Noah’s sacrifice. He makes a covenant with him. But what is *the sign* for the days and the generations to come? It is the bow in the cloud; a sign most apposite doubtless to the circumstance of the recent awful judgment, but it is most significant that there is no mention of any *place where God sets His name*, no mention of anything like that “*face of God*” from which it was such anguish for Cain to

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xi. 5—7.

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be driven away, of any Shekinah or Presence such as afterwards began to be vouchsafed again to Abraham and the Patriarchs.

Surely then we are not wrong in our conclusion, that there was a period of diminished spiritual Presence upon the earth, that with the call of Abraham the Presence began to be returned, vouchsafed to Abraham from time to time, but *always within the limits of the Holy Land*; vouchsafed to Isaac and Jacob, *but always within the same limits*; restored permanently to the chosen people when they commenced their *return to the Holy Land*; and now restored in full to the Church of Christ, with which and in which He continually dwells, and which Presence we behold by the spiritual senses which are once more quickened into life by the operation of the Holy Spirit the Pentecostal gift, won for us all by the “Seed of Abraham.”

Thus then in some measure we have striven to work out the meaning and the effect of the dreadful sentence which preceded the close of the elder dispensation. The dispersion at Babel was its final issue and completion. No use now for mankind

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to linger around the ancient seat of the withdrawn Shekinah. They will only fall into a universal idolatry;—universal, centralized, and of imposing grandeur. Better that they should be broken up and scattered into even hostile nations, the while that Providence by slow steps leads the way to the outpouring of a new life, a new spiritual life, and a new and vital *power* of unity, in the gift of the uniting Spirit which is the centre of a yet higher unity than that of the antediluvian world.

It is a common thing to regard the Day of Pentecost as the *reversal* of the *confusion of tongues*;—and so it was:—but why?—Not because it was this only, but because it was also the reversal of the cause which rendered the dispersion necessary.

In the Day of Pentecost two things occurred. First the restoration of the Presence in the full Christian sense, the fulfilment of the promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Secondly, the imparting of a new principle of spiritual life. The first of these is external to man, the second is internal. Each answers to each,

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for it is by the Spirit that we apprehend the restored Presence of the Creator and the Redeemer who now abides with us. The Presence would be in vain were it not that our spiritual faculties are enlightened and aroused to perceive it. The renewal of our spiritual faculties would be superfluous were it not that a Divine Presence is offered to us upon which they may rest in adoration and love.

And this being so, the Day of Pentecost *is* the restoration of the unity which was lost at Babel. Not that it restores the outward and visible unity at once and visibly. God does not *so* work. Even the dispersion at Babel came centuries after its long preceding cause had existed. And so with God's works of restoration. From within outward is the progress always. A spiritual force implanted, a spiritual cause set in motion, effects silently, surely, mysteriously working themselves out, visible to the spiritual eye, veiled under outward circumstance and common life to the unspiritual understanding: such is the usual course. Space fails us to illustrate at

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greater length our final proposition, but surely the most cursory reader of modern history must recognise something of the healing, reuniting power which has ever gone forth from the Church of God for the benefit of a distracted world, since the Pentecostal miracle. Split, rent, and torn as the Church has been by the sins and ignorances of her members, still it has been to her, and to her alone, that we can look for any permanently uniting power at all upon the scene of human history or national action. Ah, we may well sigh for the unity of the Church ! Were the Church *truly* one in actual effect, as she is in the source of her inner life, the battle against evil would be already won, the Spirit would have overcome the flesh, and the kingdoms of the world would already be the kingdoms of God and of His Christ !

“ My Spirit shall not always strive with man.”

Some very solemn thoughts recur respecting the probable nature of the close of this later dispensation of God’s Grace and Presence, when we reflect how often the days

THE SPIRIT STRIVING WITH MAN, &c.

before the deluge are taken as the type and pattern of the days which shall usher in the close of the present dispensation of the Spirit, and the next purgation of the earth by fire. We as now temples of the Holy Ghost are capable of spiritual wickedness of a deeper dye than those old dwellers in the plain of Shinar, who strove to build their tower and to make them a god. We are once more capable of spiritual rebellion against the spiritual Presence which is among us, and in *us* those sins of the flesh by which the old world fell are sins against the Holy Ghost in a new and fearful sense. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost. We are bound to glorify God both in our *spirits* and in our *bodies*, which are His. Infidelity and sensuality are the predicted sins of the latter days, and both will be of a fearfully aggravated dye. For the Spirit now strives in *us* in a sense and in a manner more intimate and more deeply spiritual, not merely as some surviving portion of the natural gifts showered on the first Adam, but as the highest gift of the second Adam, Which is the Lord from heaven.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## TRINITY SUNDAY.

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### THE NAME JEHOVAH.

THE name of God ! What solemn thoughts are awakened by these words ! Over how fathomless a depth do we bend when we seek to investigate this mystery of mysteries ! “ Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out unto perfection<sup>a</sup>. ” “ Clouds and darkness are round about Him<sup>b</sup>. ” “ He maketh darkness His secret place ; His pavilion round about Him, with dark water and thick clouds to cover Him<sup>c</sup>. ”

The name of God ! It is indeed but little that we can know of Him in Himself. “ The invisible things of Him, ” that is, His eternal power and Godhead<sup>d</sup>, are indeed perceived by means of His works, and He has Himself

<sup>a</sup> Job xxxvii. 23, xi. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. xcvi. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. xviii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. i. 20.

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made a further revelation of them in His Word, so far as our finite capacities are able to receive these truths. And it is from these manifestations of Himself in the volume of nature and of revelation that we form our ideas of God. We conceive of infinite wisdom and power and love. We suppose these excellencies to be all gathered together into one eternal, self-existent, and transcendently glorious Being, and we call that Being God. Indeed, the very words employed to express the name of God for the most part declare to us some one or other of His attributes ; as, for example, our own Saxon word God, which is in fact the same as GOOD, as though to shew that He whom we represent by that name is only perfect goodness. But every word of human invention must necessarily fail to convey an adequate idea of the Divine essence.

It is natural, therefore, that we should turn with peculiar interest to those expressions which holy men, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have employed in the Bible to denote the name of God,

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because we feel assured that in the reverent examination of these expressions we must approach most nearly to such an understanding as we are here capable of reaching, of the mystery of the being and attributes of the Creator.

Of these, the first term which we find employed to represent the Divine Being is ELOHIM, which in our Version is translated God. It is remarkable that this word is almost always used in the plural number; and it has thus, with good reason, been inferred that we have in the very earliest portion of the Inspired Record, even in the very first sentence of Holy Scripture, an intimation of a plurality of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead. The word ELOHIM is supposed to be derived from a root which signifies ‘to be strong.’ At all events, the primary idea contained in this word is ‘power;’ in the plural ‘powers.’ And this is undoubtedly one of the very first ideas suggested by the thought of God. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that POWER belongeth unto God<sup>e</sup>.”

\* Ps. lxii. 11.

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To this word God we soon find the word ALMIGHTY added (EL-SHADDAI), and that too by God Himself. For when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to him, and said, "I am the ALMIGHTY GOD; walk before Me, and be thou perfect."<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of our notice in passing, that this title is almost universally used in the Book of Job..

But the name of deepest interest and significance is that of JEHOVAH, which in our Version is translated LORD. There is, indeed, another word (ADONAI) translated Lord. But our translators have for the most part marked the difference between the two words by printing the word Lord in small capital letters when it is the translation of JEHOVAH, and in the ordinary type when it is only the translation of ADONAI; as, for example, in Psalm ex. 1, "The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adonai)."

This name JEHOVAH, like that of EL-SHADDAI, was revealed directly by God Himself, but under such peculiar and impressive circumstances as to justify some considera-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xvii. 1.

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tion of them before we proceed to examine the name itself.

The person chosen by God for this communication was Moses, who stands out foremost amongst the Old Testament worthies. It may be doubted whether amongst them all there is any character which approaches that of Moses in dignity and heavenly interest. There is in him that union of firmness and meekness, of majesty and simplicity, which marks him out as so pre-eminent a type of Christ ; and we feel that there is really nothing like him along the line of the goodly fellowship of the saints of old, until the eye rests at length upon that greater Prophet, like unto him, whom he foreshadowed and of whom he wrote.

The life of this remarkable man, consisting of a hundred and twenty years, may be conveniently broken into three nearly equal periods of about forty years each ; of which periods the first was spent in the court of Pharaoh, the second in exile in the land of Midian, and the third in the wilderness as the ruler of Israel. It was at the close of the second period, and when he was

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therefore about eighty years old, that God revealed Himself to him by this name of JEHOVAH. His whole life had been a remarkable manifestation of the triumphs of faith. It was by faith that he “forsook Egypt;” and under the influence of the same mighty principle he had submitted for forty years to the discipline and preparation needful to qualify him to be the ruler and leader of nearly three millions of his countrymen. At length the time arrived when it was the Divine will that he should go forth and announce himself to Pharaoh, as the divinely appointed deliverer of his nation. But to so momentous and apparently hazardous a mission it was fitting that he should be sent by a special and miraculous call of the Almighty. Let us pause for a moment and reverently review the circumstances<sup>s</sup>. The future lawgiver had led the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro far into the wilderness of Mount Sinai, even as far as to Horeb, the Mount of God. And there, in that solitude, destined to be the scene not long afterwards of such great and terrible wonders, did Moses

<sup>s</sup> Exod. iii.

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receive his commission. His attention was suddenly arrested by a fire breaking forth out of the midst of a thorn-bush<sup>h</sup>, and as he looked, he saw that though the shrub blazed it was not consumed. Moses was then proceeding to examine the mysterious appearance more closely, when he was interrupted by a voice calling to him by name, and forbidding him to approach nearer to so sacred a spot. It was indeed "holy ground," for there the Lord manifested Himself, and declared Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Moses, then, being assured that it was indeed God who was speaking to him, "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." The Lord then proceeded to tell him that He had seen the affliction of His people, and that He had come down to deliver them, and to bring them up out of that land of slavery into a land of freedom, a land flowing with milk

<sup>h</sup> This bush (*Seneh*) is believed to be the wild acacia which yet grows in profusion upon the slopes of the mountains of Sinai, overhanging the Red Sea. The *shittim* wood, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, is the wood of this tree.

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and honey ; nay more, that he himself, even Moses, should be the instrument of their deliverance. As Moses hesitated at the greatness of this commission, and shrank from its responsibilities, the Lord encouraged him by still further unfolding His purposes ; and at length, in answer to His servant's request, He revealed Himself by His name : " God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM : and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you <sup>i</sup>."

There are few manifestations in Holy Scripture more striking or more instructive than this. Even in its outer circumstances it is deeply impressive. The mysterious flame in that secluded spot, breaking forth amidst the dry branches of the spreading thorn-bush and yet not consuming them, speaks to us with deep emphasis of the awfulness of the Divine presence. In the manifestation of Himself by fire we have a representation of the holiness and justice of God ; and in the restraint of that flame, so that it could not consume, we have a no

<sup>i</sup> Exod. iii. 14.

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less clear representation of His mercy and His love.

And how strikingly did this “great sight” represent the condition of the chosen people at that very moment. They were then apparently consuming away in the furnace of affliction. But though “persecuted,” they were “not forsaken,” though “cast down,” they were not “destroyed.” Their deliverer and their deliverance were nigh at hand. They were soon to quit the stifling brick-yards of Egypt for the freedom of the wilderness; and when the appointed period of their wanderings was fulfilled, they were to enter upon the possession of the pleasant fields of Canaan.

And as then, so in after times. Throughout the history of the Israelites we find continual illustrations of the bush in Horeb; and it may be that as the time of the end draws near we may see yet further fulfilments of the type. There are prophecies which point with no uncertain meaning to some great ingathering of the Jewish people into the Christian fold; an ingathering which shall be associated with all that is

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most blessed and glorious in the fortunes of the Church of God. "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead<sup>x</sup>?" Thus this bush, so long burning, so long unconsumed, shall again shoot out its "boughs unto the sea" and its "branches unto the river," until the whole earth is covered with its shadow.

And that which is true of the ancient people of God, is true also of the Church of Christ, of which indeed their whole history is a type. For what is the history of the Church, but one continual record of protection in danger, of strength in weakness, yea! of life in death. From age to age the flame has harmlessly twined its wreath around the holy bush of God's Church; and if we seek for the reason of this marvellous preservation, it is simply this, "God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early<sup>1</sup>."

And is not this the experience also of every faithful Christian? Like that shrub

<sup>x</sup> Rom. xi. 15.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlvi. 5.

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in the desert, he too is in the midst of the fire in the wilderness of this world. The temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh,—these are the furnace of his trial. Happy indeed is he who passes through them unharmed. And wherein lies the secret of his safety? It is the constant abiding presence within him of Jehovah. Then though the flame kindles around him he shall not be burned. “The sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night.”

But we may not dwell upon these illustrations. Let us now listen to that awful voice which speaks out of the fire, and fix our attention reverently upon the revelation which God there makes of Himself.

It is generally admitted that the word JEHOVAH means ‘He that is,’ or ‘He that exists,’ the form of the word being simply changed for greater reverence from the first person singular, where He says I AM, to the third person singular when we say of Him HE IS.

The root of this word JEHOVAH is of very great antiquity. It is a root which had become

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almost obsolete in the time of Moses. It is simply impossible from the laws of language that it could have been invented later than his time. It is far more identical with the old dialect which Abraham must have spoken when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, than with the language then spoken by the Hebrews <sup>m</sup>.

It would not be right in examining this word, to pass over the passage where, in renewing His promise of deliverance, God said to Moses, “I am JEHOVAH, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY; but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them<sup>n</sup>.” Now we certainly find this name used in the very early records, even so early as in Genesis ii. 4, and after that, with more or less frequency down to the time of the solemn communication of it from the bush in Horeb. Various explanations have been offered for

<sup>m</sup> For further information on this point, see the admirable “Lectures on the Pentateuch and the Elohistic Psalms,” by the Bishop of Ely. (London: Parkers. 1863.)

<sup>n</sup> Exod. vi. 2, 3.

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this difficulty<sup>o</sup>. But it seems to admit of at least this one simple solution, that though the name JEHOVAH was in use long before the manifestation to Moses, yet its true depth of meaning was till then unknown and uncomprehended. The mere combina-

<sup>o</sup> It has been suggested that soon after the Exodus Moses may have been moved, under Divine inspiration, to prepare a short and compendious history of the world, and of the Jewish people down to that period. In this supposed earlier draft, the word ELOHIM would be the word that he would naturally employ. Assuming this supposition to be correct, and that towards the close of his life he amplified and completed the history; then in this later record he would as naturally make frequent use of the word JEHOVAH, which would by that time have become familiar to the people, and revered, as we know it was, by them. If we further suppose that instead of destroying the earlier draft, he combined it with the more complete and copious record, we find a very simple explanation of the apparently promiscuous use of the two words.

Another reasonable solution is the following; that when the Lawgiver wrote his history he frequently substituted for the more ancient name of God, that newly revealed name which by the time at which he wrote had come to be regarded with the greatest reverence by his countrymen. That is, that where he saw fit, he employed the word as it were by anticipation.

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tion of the letters and syllables may have been known, and probably was known, long before ; but the Divine glory and majesty which lay enshrined in that word was not till then fully recognised. It is as though God said, ‘ The patriarchs knew Me as God ALMIGHTY ; but I never made Myself known to them, nor confirmed My promise to them as I do now to thee, by saying, I am JEHOVAH, I have established My covenant.’

Having thus far cleared our way, we now approach the meaning of this word. And here, let us first observe, that God declares of Himself simply I AM. He does not say, I AM, the Great, the Living, the True, the Everlasting God, but simply I AM, as though to intimate to us that when we have said of God HE IS, we have said well nigh all that can be said ; that there are no words, that there are no ideas by which we can adequately represent His perfections.

But now let us notice,—

I. That this word JEHOVAH expresses the *self-existence* of God, that He depends upon Himself and not upon another. This is what cannot be affirmed of any creature. It

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could not be said of one of ourselves ‘He is,’ simply because it would not have been true of any one of us one hundred and fifty years ago. We were not then in existence. We are but of yesterday. Our existence is a derived existence. And as we have derived our being from our Creator, so do we depend upon Him for its continuance. We live, so to speak, by sufferance. We cannot assure life to ourselves for one single moment beyond the present. It is “in Him,” and not in or of ourselves, that “we live, and move, and have our being.” And this, which is true of us, is true of every created thing. He upholdeth “all things by the word of His power;” so that if He were “to let loose His hand,” as the patriarch Job expresses it, all things would cease to be. It is only one who is self-existent who can fully satisfy the expression **HE IS.**

II. Then, further, this word JEHOVAH expresses the *simplicity* of the Divine nature. **I AM THAT I AM**, without mixture or composition. Through the weakness of our finite understanding, we are, as it were,

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compelled to take certain known attributes of Deity, as power, and wisdom, and justice, and love; and gathering them up into a composite whole, we thus form our conception of God. We take these properties and construct them together, and we call Him in whom they thus meet and are united, by the name of God. But in real truth these attributes are not several parts of God. They are not distinguishable from His nature. They *are* His very nature, His very essence itself. You cannot separate His wisdom from His justice, or His justice from His love. For in every act of Deity, both wisdom, and justice, and love concur. It is this habit of separating the Divine attributes, of viewing any one of them by itself, apart from its relation to the rest, that often leads to erroneous conclusions with regard to the Divine nature and actions. We are prone to think that He is "altogether such a one as ourselves," and thus we mistake and question His dealings with regard to the moral government of the world.

Take, for example, His attribute of mercy. Men dwell upon that perfection as though

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it existed alone, and thus they venture to question whether it is consistent with Divine love that God should punish the wicked eternally. They pass the beam of His attributes, as it were, through a prism of their own fashioning, and so separate the rays, and consider of them as though they were distinct and unconnected. They are apt to think that a conflict goes on between these perfections, and that each act of Deity is the result of a triumph of one over the other. They think that it is justice only which smites, and love only which spares, forgetting that it is JEHOVAH who punishes and JEHOVAH who pardons; so that wisdom and justice and love alike combine in rewarding the righteous and condemning the wicked; yea, and that every act of Deity is one grand harmonious impulse to that which is best. In all His dealings He is wholly the same pure, unmixed, essential JEHOVAH.

III. But again. This word JEHOVAH expresses the *eternity* of God. When we try to realize eternity, we are fain to do this by taking the present moment as our starting-

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point, and conceiving of an indefinite extension of time, both backwards and forwards. And thus does the Bible aid our feeble imaginings. For it describes the eternal God as One who is “from everlasting to everlasting,” and again, as He “who was, and is, and is to come.” But in real truth, and in our higher conceptions of it, eternity cannot be described by the successions of time. The largest measure of time that you can conceive of affords, so to speak, no idea of eternity. It is in the simple word I AM that we find an expression which satisfies the Divine eternity. Eternity itself cannot exhaust this expression. The everlasting God has no past or future, but a perpetual presence. He always is—no younger a million of ages ago, no older a million of ages hence. In the hoary past He is, in the fathomless reach of the future He is—the eternal JEHOVAH.

IV. Yet, once more, the word JEHOVAH expresses the *immutability* of God. “I am JEHOVAH, I change not.” It is as though He said, ‘I am JEHOVAH, which means I

<sup>p</sup> Ps. xc. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Rev. i. 8.

<sup>r</sup> Mal. iii. 6.

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am always the same.' It is no doubt for this reason that we so frequently read the words "I am JEHOVAH" in connection with the proclaiming of a commandment, the threatening of a judgment, or the promise of a blessing. It was in fact the establishing of a covenant on the part of God, by an appeal to His unchangeableness. The highest assurance that He could give to Abraham of His truth and faithfulness was Himself. Seeing that "He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself." He pledged Himself by His own eternal and immutable being.

We have seen, then, that this wonderful word JEHOVAH expresses the *self-existence*, the *simplicity*, the *eternity*, and the *immutability* of the Divine nature; and we shall now, therefore, be enabled to perceive something of its deep significance as compared with ELOHIM.

ELOHIM represents God to us in His attribute of power, the great Creator and Governor of the universe. JEHOVAH brings Him near to us as a personal God, and re-

• Heb. vi. 13.

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presents Him in His relation to man as the covenant God of His people. Bearing this in mind, we are able to throw some light upon the varied and apparently promiscuous use of the two names in the writings of Moses. That use is not arbitrary or indifferent. For the most part, when Moses speaks of God simply as the Creator and in His attribute of Omnipotence, as in Gen. i., he describes Him throughout as ELOHIM; but when he comes to speak of Him in His innermost being, and in His relation to man, then he speaks of Him as JEHOVAH. For example, it is ELOHIM who creates the world; but after the creation of man, it is JEHOVAH who lays His commandment upon Adam and Eve in Paradise. It is JEHOVAH who makes a covenant with Abram. It is JEHOVAH who is the covenant God of Israel. The statutes and the judgments are those of JEHOVAH. The tabernacle and the temple are dedicated to the worship of JEHOVAH. The priests offer sacrifice to Him; in His name the prophets prophesy. JEHOVAH ELOHIM, the Lord God, is the King of His people. In fact, what Jehovah is in the

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Old Testament, that Christ is in the New; and that for this simple reason, that Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of the Father, is Himself Jehovah, the Self-existent, the Eternal, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever<sup>t</sup>."

Such a truth arises necessarily out of the great doctrine which the Church especially commemorates this day. But it is interesting to remember that our Lord Himself lays claim to this title, when in answer to the unbelieving Jews He says, "Before Abraham was, I AM<sup>u</sup>." It is doubtless on this account that the narrative of the appearance to Moses in the bush at Horeb, and of this discourse of our Lord with the Jews, are brought together by our Church, so as to be always read on the same Sunday<sup>x</sup>. They come together, and that not by chance or accident, but that our attention may be fixed upon the circumstances, and that we may see here, as everywhere in Holy Scripture, how the Eternal Son is the manifestation of

<sup>t</sup> Heb. xiii. 8.

<sup>u</sup> St. John viii. 58.

<sup>x</sup> The First Lesson and the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent.

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God to man. “The Only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him<sup>y</sup>.” It adds to the beauty and significance of this when we read how Moses in his parting blessing to Joseph speaks of the “good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush<sup>z</sup>. ” We do not mean that the Father was not favourably disposed towards mankind, or that the Holy Spirit was not ready to strive with man. But the Only-begotten Son is the manifestation of that “good will.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself<sup>a</sup>. ”

We have been endeavouring to meditate upon the name of God. But do we not feel that such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for us? Do we not all feel how even when we strive to think of Him as He has revealed Himself to us, we soon lose ourselves in the brightness of that “inaccessible light” in which He dwells? Surely the place on which we stand is “holy ground.” Nevertheless, to meditate upon God as He wills may have great avail, by

<sup>y</sup> St. John i. 18.

<sup>z</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 16.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19.

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shewing us our own nothingness and His majesty, to teach us the lesson of humility and reverence. Such a lesson seems specially needed in the present day. The general spread of what are called liberal opinions, the advances of science, and the more general diffusion of superficial knowledge,—all these things have a tendency to develope a habit and tone of mind which unfits men for the study of Divine mysteries. And it may be also that a mere subjective theology, without its proper safeguard of objective truth, has had its share in contributing to this result. But for this tendency in all its degrees the study of the Bible, with prayer that its Divine Author would unfold its meaning, and the honest and faithful acceptance of the whole counsel of God, is at once the trial and the remedy.

To reach the inner meaning of Holy Scripture we must approach the study with suitable moral dispositions; with faith, with humility, with reverence; with heart and understanding devoted to the will of God; and then, though we may not be able to solve every difficulty, we shall at least dis-

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cover that path of eternal life which runs like a thread of light through the deepest cloud of mystery.

“If any man will do His will,” or, as it might be rendered, *is willing to do His will*, “he shall know of the doctrine.” The more we give ourselves up in a willing surrender of ourselves to do the will of God, the more shall we be able to recognise the glory and the preciousness of the Name of God, so as to be able to say with adoring gratitude, “**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHICH WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO COME. HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF THY GLORY. GLORY BE TO THEE, O LORD MOST HIGH. AMEN.**”

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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### JOSHUA.

THE character of Joshua the son of Nun, which is brought before us in the lessons for this Sunday, is interesting and instructive, (1) on account of its own eminent merits; (2) because we may consider Joshua as the product and example of a religious system; and (3) because, as we are reminded by his name, which is the Hebrew original of Jesus, he is a typical personage, in whose proceedings subsequent history was shadowed forth.

1. It is a character of great simplicity and consistency. He is an energetic, zealous servant of the Lord, when we first hear of him, and such he continues to the end. Soon after the Exodus, in the first encounter with Israel's enemies, he has a great part of the leadership assigned to him, and commands

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in the combat below, while Moses, on the height above, represents the all-powerful Intercessor<sup>a</sup>. When ten out of twelve spies report that it is hopeless to attack the sons of Anak, in their cities walled and very great, and that, chosen princes as they were, they felt as grasshoppers before their foes, Joshua had the courage, along with Caleb, to exclaim, “Rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not<sup>b</sup>.”

He who stood out against an overwhelming majority of his fellows, and risked being stoned by the people, continued to exhibit the same valour. Prompt in war, his action in civil government also is always decided. No character has less alloy of weakness or selfishness. Throughout he is the man of God, realizing his mission, thinking little of self, going straight on to his work. He reminds us of what would have been called in mediæval times a true knight. Like a genuine Crusader, a St. Louis, the embodi-

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xvii. 9.

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xiv. 9.

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ment of Christian zeal, courage, and truth, he does not know the meaning of the word ‘difficulty’ when he hears the call of duty, and, in token of the approbation of Heaven on this gallantry, he is enabled to effect what appear impossibilities.

No one in sacred history who appears on the scene for so long a time, and is engaged in such various transactions, is so blameless. “ Possibly,” says one, “ it is this very freedom from fault which makes him appear less great than he really was. He was essentially the religious soldier. . . . He is terrible, indeed, to his enemies, but he has all that gentleness which belongs to the true soldier.” And then he mentions “ his personal courage, active untiring energy, severe sense of honour, singleness of aim, straightforward truthfulness, modesty in referring to his own services, and reverence in the discharge of religious duties.”

He is as tender as his duty allows him to be to Achan; he maintains the public faith to the Gibeonites, spite of the murmuring of the congregation; he is unhurt by pros-

• “Quarterly Review,” No. 212.

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perity, and instead of lapsing in his old age, as some other great men have done, he never shines out so brightly as when, in the close of his day, he declares that, let the people serve whom they will, he and his house will serve the Lord. He has the reward which is bestowed on the decided and consistent. In the centre of the land, in the head-quarters of his own, then the leading tribe, he gathers all Israel, their elders, their heads, their judges, their officers, and he is able to depart in peace, having obtained the people's deliberate vow to put away strange gods, and a renewal of the national covenant, reduced to writing. What nobler epitaph was ever engraven on a tomb than those words with which he is dismissed, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel <sup>a</sup>."

2. But, next, consider Joshua as a product of the Mosaic system. He is a pattern Israelite, a sample of what the rever-

<sup>a</sup> Josh. xxiv. 31.

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lation, through Moses, should have made all the Hebrews. Doubtless God is generally pleased to work on a basis of natural qualities, and we are not obliged to think that Joshua was originally devoid of the qualifications of which soldiers and leaders are made; but still he is a glorious specimen of the result of Divine training, and the extent to which Divine interposition may elevate men. He was born and grew up a slave in Egypt. We have no reason to suppose that he, like Moses, owed anything to the learning or wisdom of the Egyptians. The Exodus and the wilderness made him what he became. The whole Jewish people, doubtless, greatly benefited by their sojourn in the wilderness. It removed them from the contamination of a highly civilized but idolatrous and luxurious people. It braced their energies and trained them to martial habits, in the roughness of desert life, and the isolation of the Arabian peninsula. When they first came out of Egypt they knew so little of war that they were unfit to be led against their enemies, but the rugged wilds of the Arabian moun-

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tains were a divinely ordained practising-ground, to exercise the hosts that were by-and-by to be let loose on Palestine. They who had been a poor crushed tribe of oppressed slaves had learnt to regard themselves as a nation, with a history and a destiny. They had not only become independent, but it was to be a matter of privilege and difficulty to be incorporated with them.

Joshua we may consider the most conspicuous example of the success of the training which the Israelites had gone through. Even at this distance of time, and notwithstanding all the changes which separate ancient from modern warfare, military men see the merits of his strategy. But it concerns us more to notice how completely he was imbued with the spirit of the institutions of Moses. He is the Law in action. What the legislator had ordained, that the man of the sword carries out.

It is due to no views of his own that he extirpates the Canaanites, he is simply obeying the directions of the Pentateuch<sup>o</sup>. He is the first on record who had the written

<sup>o</sup> Deut. xx. 16–18.

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Word of God for his guidance: “ Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi.” Joshua is the leader of those who, in all ages since, have found Holy Scripture their armoury: “ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Constantly we find him acting according to the precedents of Moses. He sends out before him spies to obtain information, as his predecessor had done. He says to the people, “ Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” He renews circumcision; he keeps the passover; as soon as he has crossed Jordan, before he has fought one battle or taken one town, as one who sought success not by worldly expedients, but by simple faith, and implicit obedience to Divine commands. When Israel is smitten before Ai, he pleads with God in a tone that he had caught from

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Josh. i. 8.

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Moses<sup>b</sup>. No sooner is Ai taken, than the campaign is arrested, for the national gathering between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, when “there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel<sup>i</sup>.” In truth the beauty of Joshua’s character is that he had a definite rule to go by, and he devoted himself to the carrying it out. “As the Lord commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses<sup>j</sup>.”

A system is perhaps best judged by its earliest products, by those disciples who have experienced its first vigour, and have suffered from no decay of its fundamental principles, or from extraneous influences imported into it afterwards. Mahometanism is represented by the early caliphs, monasticism by the early monks, Christianity by the Apostles, and the Mosaic institutions by their child and propagator Joshua.

### 3. The selection of the name of Joshua

<sup>b</sup> Bishop Hall’s “Contemplations.”

<sup>i</sup> Josh. viii. 35.

<sup>j</sup> Ibid. xi. 15.

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as the human name of the Redeemer was doubtless intended to induce us to notice the analogy between the two saviours who, in such infinitely different degrees, have been agents in the Lord's salvation. As every Israelite must have associated the possession of Canaan, the allocation of the tribes, the assignment of the Levitical cities with the son of Nun<sup>k</sup>, so every Christian privilege dates from Him whom His countrymen knew as Joshua of Nazareth. As the first Joshua succeeded a Moses, who could only indicate the land of promise but could not enter it, so Christianity succeeds the Law, which foretold better things than it could provide. The ancient Joshua foreshadows the Christ not as a suffering, but as a triumphant Messiah.

The Redeemer's work is so transcendant and incomparable, that it is not unusual in Holy Scripture for the function of representing Him to be divided between two or more personages, rather than sustained by one. Moses and Joshua, between them, make a nearer approach to prefiguring the

<sup>k</sup> See Acts vii. 4, 5.

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Saviour, than either is able to do separately. Moses prefigures our Lord in His legislative and prophetical office, to an extent which it is not the purpose of this tract to unfold, while Joshua shews the powers of the Gospel in action, its triumph over opposition, and its establishment in the world.

The relation between the Books of Moses and that of Joshua finds its parallel in that between the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The second volume of St. Luke's great work, that which we style the Acts, is as much occupied with the Saviour as his first volume which we call the Gospel, only in it the Saviour is working invisibly, through His Church and Apostles. That first Church history, and all true ecclesiastical history ever since, is the history of the true Joshua dispossessing the heathen, rooting out idolatry, planting His people in possession, arranging for them their life, organizing their institutions, appropriating that which the heathen had misapplied, and reclaiming it to a nobler use<sup>1</sup>; using weapons, apparently

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Year"—Third Sunday in Lent, The Spoils of Satan.

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contemptible, to demolish the world's strongholds, proclaiming God's curses as well as His blessings, waging irreconcileable war with immorality, prescribing entire abstinence from the accursed thing, and perpetuating warnings, fenced round about with curses, against the rebuilders of that which the Most High would have demolished.

Joshua, then, rather represents the work of the ascended Christ, carried on by His people, than the labours of the Saviour's personal ministry. It is a sketch of the Christian Church in its missionary aspect, as it goes forth conquering and to conquer, which we discover under the record of the occupation of Palestine.

Perhaps, if we revert to some passages in the history of the first Joshua, we shall see fresh interest given them by these considerations.

It is not unnatural to ask how Joshua became what he was? and must not the answer be that it was mainly by being admitted to intimacy with Moses? Joshua was his minister; he poured water, we may suppose, on Moses' hands, as did Elisha

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for Elijah, Gehazi for his master. Though he shared not his master's miraculous fast, he was brought into close connection with it. He was practised first in smaller encounters, under the eye of his superior, before greater responsibilities devolved on him. He receives a charge, he has hands laid on him, and, beside these general helps, he has special aid furnished by that interview with the captain of the Lord's host which we shall presently consider more particularly.

Now, what Moses was to Joshua, that and much more was our Lord to His Apostles visibly, and to His Church in all ages invisibly. Joshua was as it were the Apostle, the St. Peter, of the first lawgiver. The Lord's Apostles owed most of their success to the intimacy to which He admitted them, and the training He bestowed on them. Of some He changed the names, as Joshua's was changed. They, too, were zealous for their master, with ill-informed zeal<sup>m</sup>. They, too, were practised in small encounters first,

<sup>m</sup> Compare Numb. xi. 28 with St. Mark ix. 38.

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in preparation for the time when, their master being removed, they should be elevated to a higher office, and find tremendous responsibilities devolve upon them. As Joshua was a product and specimen of the Mosaic influence, and won his victories by simply carrying out his mission, and believing in the power that went with him ; so did the Apostles and early Christians win their victories because they were imbued with the mind of Christ, and had attained, so to say, to intimacy with their Head. They reminded men of their Teacher ; beholders saw a change in them, and could only account for it by taking knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. And the Christian Church may hope to repeat these successes, when it has similarly imbued itself with the spirit of its prophet, when it realizes who is with it, whose battles it is really fighting, how impotent man is without Him, how powerful with Him, and under Him.

Alas ! the history of the Church has been too much like that of the Jews. They failed to avail themselves of the powers they pos-

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sessed, they did the work of God imperfectly, they came to terms with their enemies, they accepted of a compromise, they left the heathen in the plains and were content with the mountains, they quailed before fortresses, they admitted to tribute those whom they ought to have extirpated, and were punished by finding them thorns in their sides. How changed might a considerable portion of the world's history have been if Asher had driven out the inhabitants of Zidon <sup>a</sup>. They little knew what was at stake when, failing to use the powers they possessed, they tolerated the existence of a city which was to affect Africa, Italy, Spain, and Britain. And so with Christians,—the work of rooting out heathen sentiments, customs, and immorality has been but imperfectly done, the tide of missionary enterprise ebbs, it is long since we have seen any inroad made on heathenism, such as the first centuries saw, or as was again seen when the Northern barbarians passed into zealous Christians; but there is, thank God, this great difference between the case of the

<sup>a</sup> Judges i. 31.

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Jews and ours, that the Jewish Joshua died and could not be resuscitated, he waxed old and was stricken in age, and went the way of all the earth, but our Joshua is ever living, ever approachable, ever ready to lead us to new victories and new triumphs. He seems to slumber, but it is that we may arouse Him by our prayers: "Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel: stir up Thy strength, and come, and help us."<sup>o</sup>

Observe that the selection of this particular Sunday as the one on which the Book of Joshua is read falls in with the view we have been indicating. We have at last reached the point whence we can survey all that has been done for us. For nearly six months we have been watching the gradual unfolding of the plans of revelation. From the manger of Bethlehem we have tracked our Redeemer to the throne of heaven, we have received the gifts of Pentecost, and in last Sunday's festival celebrated that nearness to each Divine Person of the ever-blessed Trinity into which we have been brought. It remains now to act on our

<sup>o</sup> Ps. lxxx. 1, 2.

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privileges, to make use of the “power from on high” which has been brought us, to do justice to the cause entrusted to us, as did Apostles of old, and Joshua the son of Nun their precursor.

Let us examine more closely one passage of his history, viz. the angelic appearance recorded in the fifth chapter; it greatly influenced his career, and is calculated to affect ours.

Brave as he was in war, there must have been times when Joshua needed encouragement, so repeatedly is he exhorted to be strong<sup>p</sup>. He must have been well aware how unequal he was to take the place of him with whom the Lord had talked face to face, as a man talketh with his friend, and he may well have felt that he, the less distinguished person, was expected to accomplish a more difficult work than had been proposed to Moses, with his greater powers. To Joshua it fell to dispossess the Canaanites with all their old civilization, their cities walled and fenced up to heaven, men who would sell their lives dear when

<sup>p</sup> Deut. i. 38; Josh. i. 6, 18, x. 8, xi. 6.

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they understood that there was nothing but extirpation before them. At the very moment of the vision he was standing before Jericho, a more considerable place than most of the Canaanitish cities, and to attack which he had what was yet scarcely a well-appointed army. The Israelites without supernatural assistance would be no match for the natives of Palestine.

This was, too, just the time when the aid which had hitherto supported Israel was, to some degree, being withdrawn. The pillar of the cloud probably no longer guided them, "the manna" certainly had "ceased," that, to which they had been accustomed for forty years, was withdrawn. It was entering on a very new state of things to pass from their desert life, where the water of the rock followed them, and their food lay round about their camp, and their raiment waxed not old, and to come into a land which they had to conquer, inch by inch, and where their supplies must be procured in the ordinary way.

Just, then, when Joshua was perhaps reconnoitring, and considering how to set

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about an attack on Jericho, “he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” and he said, “Nay, but as captain, i.e. prince, of the host of the Lord am I now come.” Joshua had before been in the habit of regarding himself as the captain of the Lord’s host, but he now learns that there is one above him; he is only a subordinate, though he had thought himself supreme. The invisible captain is one far more powerful than the visible. “Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?” He is abashed, as man ever has been in the presence of heavenly beings; he offers worship of some sort; he acknowledges his subordinate position, and asks for direction,—“What saith my lord unto his servant?” The captain of the Lord’s host, far from signifying that Joshua was excessive in his demonstrations of respect, cries, on the contrary, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place

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whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." What further passed we are not told, whether directions were then given, for all Joshua's subsequent proceedings, or specially for the capture of Jericho, in that extraordinary way, so seemingly inadequate, the procession round the city for six days, in silence, save that the priests blew the jubilee-horns before the ark of the Lord, and then, on the seventh day, the seven circuits, till the shout was to rise, the walls to fall down flat, the Israelites to enter, and the inhabitants of the accursed city to be given into their hands.

We will not stay to discuss who this being was, that appeared now as prince or captain of the Lord's host, whether an angel, or the Lord of angels, the Son of God Himself, rehearsing, so to say, the incarnation, shewing Himself as the true leader of His people, who alone succeeds Moses, introduces His servants into rest, gives them the true Canaan, divides to them their inheritance, and is indeed Jesus, Jehovah our salvation, the only one worthy of man's worship.

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We will not pronounce on this point, for learned men are divided upon it, but we can have no doubt that it was a great encouragement to Joshua, to understand that more were with him than with the enemy, to have his eyes opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant, when he saw chariots of fire and horses of fire round about his master; and we may be sure that this incident would not have been recorded in the Scriptures, which are written for men in general, were there not here some lessons for ourselves, as well as for Joshua.

If we are ever depressed, thinking how difficult it is to fill the places of eminent persons who have gone before us, here is comfort. We may not have their endowments, their experience, their training, but God will call us to no work for which He will not at the same time sufficiently equip us. He knows our weakness, our diffidence, our shrinking from responsibility <sup>a</sup>.

Again, are we in the presence of greater difficulties than those which it fell to the lot of our predecessors to encounter? Whatever

<sup>a</sup> "The Christian Year"—The Accession.

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our Jericho may be, let us believe that there is a greater One with us than we see, that means which the world laughs at as ridiculously inadequate may be blessed by Him to success; that if we will only obey His commands, however seemingly strange, we shall find opposition quelled, and the wall, which we seemed impotent to batter, shall fall down flat before us.

Then, again, do we ever feel daunted, because thrown on our own resources, and helps are withdrawn to which we have hitherto trusted? Let us believe that, if we are in the path of duty, we shall not be left alone. If we lift up our eyes, we shall discern that we have One who undertakes our duties for us, who can help us to discharge them aright, who vouchsafes to be for us that which we appear called to be, father to our children, head to our household, shepherd to our flock, physician to our patients, adviser to our clients. It was a comfort to Joshua to learn that another, not himself, had the chief authority in conducting the Lord's host, to find himself a subordinate, where he thought himself sole; and so we

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may find One greater than ourselves bearing our burthens, and relieving us under that which would be too much for us alone.

Mark how the Saviour (for if it was not He personally, it was One on His behalf) adapts Himself to men's wants, and reveals Himself just in that way and in that character which is suitable to their circumstances. Moses had a shepherd's crook naturally by him, and that crook is taken into God's service and glorified. To Joshua, eminently a soldier, He appears through the man with a drawn sword. David, a shepherd, He employs to feed Israel His people. To fishermen He reveals Himself through a miraculous draught of fishes. So will He also adapt Himself to our needs, and reveal Himself in a manner bearing on our wants, at the particular crisis.

It becomes us too, as well as Joshua, to recognise Him as Captain of the Lord's host. We are enlisted as His soldiers, we have to fight His battles, and to learn the secret of humility and strength; humility, because the victory at last will not be due to ourselves, and strength, because, assisted as we

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are, we “can do all things.” He will shew Himself to us, as the Captain of the Lord’s host, if we beseech Him to reveal Himself to us in this capacity. There is a petition in the Litany which seems to be addressed to Him somewhat under this image, it is that wherein we beseech Him “to strengthen such as do stand ; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted ; and to raise up them that fall ; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet.” How little can the commander of an earthly army do for the soldiers who are fighting in his ranks. Too often he can see only masses, he cannot notice every individual, still less can he know what is passing in the mind, and, if he did know, how little could he help ! But He, the great Captain of the Lord’s host, knows how it fares with each of us in the battle of life. He sees those that are standing, and is their strength to sustain them ; He knows those that are weak-hearted and inclined to give way, and He can comfort and help them, (comfort in the sense of fortifying, not merely consoling) ; those who have fallen, and are inclined to despair of themselves, and of whom

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man would despair, He can raise up; and finally beat down Satan under our feet. All this He would fain do. He does not (as would be easy to Him) so do the work for us as to leave us nothing to do, but it is under our feet that He will have Satan beaten down, even as the first Joshua made his soldiers put their feet on the necks of the Canaanite kings.

Who among us is standing? Let him not trust in self, but ask the Captain of the Lord's host to strengthen him. Who among us is weak-hearted? Let him seek comfort and help. Who among us has fallen, fallen perhaps grossly and frequently? Yet let him not despair, One is nigh to raise him up. Only let us not cease to fight, under His banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, till the mass of the corruption of this world, the accursed city, fall down flat, in the triumph of the seventh day, and Satan be beaten down under our feet.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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## THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

THE providential government of the world by God is a very wonderful subject for thought and contemplation. That men are not habitually impressed with the wonders of the spectacle which this providence in action exhibits to their view, and which the history of the world displays as having existed alike in all ages, is owing doubtless to that blind thoughtlessness with regard to God which is so common amongst mankind. Men see or read of the outward events which are brought about by the agency of men; they contemplate these as they are objects of interest, or as they bear upon their own happiness or that of mankind at large, but too often they do not recollect the part which the providence of God plays in such

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events. In other words, they forget God Himself. But when we fully bear in mind the place which the will of God must needs hold in the world which exists by that will, and which Holy Scripture teaches us it does hold, and at the same time think of the freedom of man's will as he is a reasonable creature created in the image of God, it cannot but fill us with wonder to think how the world is ruled by the unerring providence of God. And this wonder is greatly increased when we reflect further upon the perfect goodness of God and the exceeding wickedness of man. God works all things after the counsel of His own will, but the instruments who bring about that will are frail and erring men, often even wicked and ungodly men. In every case they are men whose will is free to act as they will, and who in their action have their own ends in view, and are stirred by their own natural impulses. It may be added that in every case they are accountable for the good or evil of their doings. And yet the result is that God's providential purposes are brought about. But yet again, on the other hand, it is no

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less true that God's will is not done by any who do wickedly. Every act of violence, every act of injustice, every act of treachery, is contrary to the revealed will of God, who says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" it is contrary to that will even at the very moment that it is instrumentally bringing about the accomplishment of His providential purpose. Thus Rebekah and Jacob in deceiving Isaac, the sons of Jacob in selling Joseph, the high-priests and elders of the Jews in putting the Lord Jesus Christ to death by their malice and false witness, were severally transgressing God's law and violating His holy will, at the very moment when they were instrumentally bringing about the purposes of His providence, and doing that which "His hand and His counsel had determined before to be done." All this is very wonderful. To comprehend it fully is far beyond our narrow grasp of intelligence. But that it must be so, reason no less than Holy Scripture teaches, for otherwise the world would not be governed at all, and God would not be God. That it is so, is to our great comfort as believers,

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and to our perfect safety as the people of God.

Hence, to advance a step further, it becomes easier to comprehend the acting of God's Providence in the world as bearing upon His purposes of mercy and grace to His Church. We know that from the moment when the first man stood upon the earth in his Maker's image, the whole future existence of the Church through all her successive developments, till she should stand arrayed in glory in her Saviour's presence as the new earth, was before the Divine mind. And as her earthly history was to be intermingled with the world's history, so at all the points of contact was the world's course to be shaped with especial reference to the Church's weal or woe. And, as again, the Church's work was to be carried on by her own sons led by God's Holy Spirit, so at each critical season in her existence, at each perilous or difficult turn of her course, has it ever been the Creator's care to bring into the world the men best suited for the work to be done, and to endue them with those very gifts which were

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needed for the work which they had to do. It was no accident that such men as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Samson, David, the Prophets, and the Apostles, were born when they were, and were such as they shewed themselves to be. It was all part of the Divine scheme from everlasting for building up that tabernacle made without hands, in which He will dwell as in a holy temple for ever and ever.

Such reflections as these are among those which are suggested by that event in the world's history which is the subject of this paper, "The Conquest of Canaan." This, like the Exodus from Egypt of which it is the sequel, may have two readings. We may read it as one of many fragments of the history of mankind, or we may read it as a part of God's extraordinary dealings with His Church, and a portion of the sacred history of the world's salvation. In its mere worldly bearing the conquest of the land of Canaan by the children of Israel, and the extirpation or subjugation of its inhabitants by the new settlers, is one of innumerable similar events in all ages and in

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all parts of the habitable globe. Supposing the Israelites to have been able to escape from their intolerable oppression in Egypt, and to have come forth simply in search of a new home, and to have found themselves strong enough to dispossess the Canaanites and to take possession of their cities and fields, it was a matter of course that they would do so, and secure the safety of their new possessions by putting the old inhabitants to the sword or depressing them into the condition of bondmen. What the Israelite conquerors did to the conquered Canaanites is the history, in most of its features, of the settlement of all the tribes of the earth in their respective habitations. The process by which the Hellenic tribes took possession of Greece, by which the Romans established themselves in Italy, by which the Anglo-Saxons made their home in Britain, by which the Danes took possession of Normandy, Sicily, England, and their other settlements; by which the Gauls overran Italy, and the Northern barbarians supplanted the empire of the Romans, was the same as that by which a Hebrew popula-

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tion became established in the room of the Canaanitish tribes. War with its various incidents of heroism on the one hand, and suffering and injustice on the other; war with its catalogue of virtues and crimes, its songs of triumph, and its cries of distress; war with its train of misery, its wasted fields and ruined cities, its loss of life and property, its cruelties and wrongs to helpless women and innocent children, has ever been the condition on which national landmarks have been removed. It is some compensation for these miseries, that in many cases civilization, good government, the arts which adorn life, the letters which ennable it, and, above all, the religion which sanctifies it, have travelled in the war-chariots of the conqueror, and brought their blessings to the land of the conquered. One generation, perhaps, has severely suffered, but tens and hundreds of generations have reaped harvests of happiness from that one seed-time of unhappiness. And in many instances vast areas of population, large integral portions of the wide world, have derived enduring moral and temporal advan-

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tages from those violent changes in the distribution of territory which, while they were being effected, were the cause of much weeping and bloodshed. It is easy for us to wish, with a cheap and unreasoning benevolence, that beneficial changes could be accomplished without violence, and the course of the world could proceed without sorrow or destruction, but such as a matter of fact is not the condition of the world we live in.

When we pass from the domain of profane to that of sacred history, we must not forget these the essential conditions of that world which is the sphere of all the outward incidents of the Church's life. In sacred history God's purposes are unveiled, and God's action is intensified, and a small number of chosen actors are more or less immediately controlled and directed by Divine utterances; but on the whole the scheme of government is that of His ordinary providence. The course of the world is the platform or stage on which the extraordinary interference is enacted. Events brought about in the usual way; the usual motives of human action; good,

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bad, and indifferent conduct; persons of mixed character; believers and unbelievers; servants of God and children of the wicked one,—these altogether make up the materials which compose the sacred history, and exhibit God as working in this evil world for the final establishment of His kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Having premised these general considerations, let us look at the conquest of Canaan, and see what illustrations of the providential government of the world by God, and what truths of closer application to the Church, we can descry in it.

We know little or nothing of the nations of Canaan at the time of the Hebrew invasion but what we learn from Scripture. The very early prevalence of the most abominable vices among those tribes to which the name of Canaanite peculiarly belonged, those, namely, in the lowlands near the Jordan, is apparent from the history of the cities of the plain. They were dealt with by especial judgment which swept them from the face of the earth which they polluted by their crimes. But whatever effect this awful

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catastrophe may have produced at the time, it was not lasting. In the days of Abraham the “iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full;” but in the days of Moses we gather, from a variety of allusions, that the various tribes whether of Amorites or Canaanites had sunk into abominations which caused the land to spue them out. From the 18th chapter of Leviticus especially we gather what were the particular enormities which made the extirpation of these tribes necessary; and have also an express declaration that it was on this account that they were doomed to destruction. “The land is defiled, therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.” But together with these abominations there was also established a system of idolatry of the most debasing character. Cruelty and obscenity went hand in hand in the rites of the gods of Canaan, and their foulest practices received the solemn sanctions of religion. In the interests of humanity, in the cause of truth and righteousness upon earth, such people were ripe for judgment, whe-

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ther by fire, by pestilence, or the sword. While these tribes had been thus ripening in their crimes against God and man, another race of men had been training in very different ways. A numerous progeny had sprung from the righteous Abraham, and had gone through that remarkable course of schooling to which allusion was made in the Tract on the Exodus. At this time they were grown into a nation; as a nation they had the knowledge of the one true and living God, and were in possession of the purest and most righteous code of laws of any nation on the face of the earth. To make them the instrument of punishing the revolting atrocities of the Canaanites, and to plant them in the land which had vomited forth its old inhabitants, that they might shew forth the light of truth and godliness, would obviously be a signal act of benevolence to mankind. And this is exactly what the conquest of Canaan effected. The tribes which had forgotten all the reverence due to God and man fell before the avenging sword of Israel. In their room stood up that people who to this very hour are the world's

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instructors in the ways of God, His messengers to guide men in the paths of salvation.

And in this connection the position of the land of Canaan which God bestowed upon the Israelites is worthy of consideration. Situated on the confines of Asia and Africa, it was well placed for giving light to both continents, and by its contact with Assyria and Egypt, did in point of fact give light to both these empires. In later times it was in contact first with Greek and then with Roman language and civilization; and later still—after the coming of Christ—it was in easy communication with Europe, both by land and by sea, and did pour forth a flood of Gospel light to the three quarters of the globe. If ever the temporary sufferings of an invasion can be compensated by the after benefits arising from it, it was so in this case, in which the hateful darkness of the detestable heathenism of the Canaanite races was replaced by the pure light of God's revealed Word, of which the Israelites were the guardians and the dispensers to the whole world.

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Nor does the wisdom of God's providence shine forth less conspicuously in the persons whom He raised up to be the leaders of the Israelites in their new settlement, and in the directions which He gave for their guidance. Bearing in mind the high moral purpose for which the Canaanites were extirpated and the Israelites placed in their room, it was obviously of the highest importance that their leaders should not only be men of ability, but men of pre-eminent piety likewise. The land was to be occupied in the Name of the Lord ; the people were to be the executioners of God's wrath upon horrible wickedness ; they were to be witnesses for the truth ; it was needful therefore that their leaders should combine in themselves the qualities which make heroes on the one hand, and those which make saints on the other. Hence the remarkable characters of the judges, unlike anything to be met with in the whole range of history. Joshua himself, the connecting link between Moses and the judges, was in some respects scarcely less eminent than Moses, and greater than any who followed

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after him. His firm and steadfast faith in God both as the Almighty Lord and as the covenant God of Israel, made him alike dauntless in facing and attacking the foe, and unswerving in his religious fidelity and truth. To fear or flinch in battle, and to bow the knee before an idol, or wink at any compromise with idolatry, were alike impossible to him. God was on his side to fight for him and for Israel, and he knew it. He was on the Lord's side, and while his faith and love were what they were, there was no question of his taking any other side, or acting a lukewarm part. Under his guidance Israel took possession of the inheritance of the land of promise. The power of heathenism fell before his victorious onslaught, and the memory of his example and the force of his influence kept the nation in the fear of God for many years after his death. It is an important feature in the whole transaction, and marks vividly its true moral character, that the superiority of Israel over the Canaanites, and even the hold they had upon the land itself, was always proportionate to the purity

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and integrity of their obedience to God's law, and their righteous antagonism to the idolatry and pollutions of heathenism. They held the country as it were by the tenure of religious service, and forfeited their title when they declined from God.

Viewed, then, in its historical aspect as an integral portion of God's providential government of the world, and yet closer in its relation to those purposes of grace to the children of men, in furtherance of which God then, as on other great occasions, put forth His power in supernatural and extraordinary ways, the conquest of Canaan, to which the Church calls our attention at this season, is a most instructive and interesting object of contemplation. An intelligent student of this chapter of the world's and the Church's history cannot fail to be impressed with the wonderful wisdom, power, and goodness of God manifested in it.

But there are also other lessons which, without departing from the sobriety of Scriptural interpretation, we may deduce from the history of the conquest of Canaan.

One of the great and awful truths re-

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vealed to us in God's Holy Word is the judgment to come. "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained," is one of many similar declarations in Holy Scripture. But the expectation of the judgment to come has been as it were confirmed from time to time by partial judgments of an extraordinary kind. The flood which swept away the world of the ungodly, and the vengeance of eternal fire which swallowed up the accursed cities, are familiar instances. In like manner, the terrible judgment which fell upon the nations of Canaan when they were smitten by the avenging sword of Israel and their name blotted out of the book of nations, was a rehearsal of an awful kind of that final judgment of God when "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." And even the natural warlike exultation of the Israelites as their enemies fell before them, and they took possession of their lands and houses, had a very marked signi-

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ficance with reference to the eternal judgments of God. It signified the holy acquiescence, and satisfaction, and consent with the mind of God with which the saints will witness the final degradation of the wicked. "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance : he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth." And thus a great and holy truth is taught, a truth which flashed out of Deborah's inspired lips when the discomfiture and death of Jabin and Sisera moved her to sing so triumphantly, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord ; but let them that love Him be as the sun when He goeth forth in his might :" a truth witnessed to in the closing Hallelujah of the Book of Psalms, when it is written, "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the

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judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Hallelujah."

And again in close connection with the above view, the conquest of Canaan was an anticipation of the glorious angelic news, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." When Joshua put his victorious feet upon the necks of the prostrate kings of Canaan, he was acting a prophetic imagery of the day when at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And when Israel took the labours of the heathen in possession, cities which they builded not, oliveyards and vineyards which they planted not, and wells which they digged not, they too were foreshadowing the time when God's earth shall serve God alone, and when all the glory of the earth, so long prostituted to the service of sin, shall beautify the Church of Christ, and all the riches of the world's substance or the world's intellect shall be poured into the holy city, and be consecrated to advance the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord alone shall be exalted.

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And truly dull must be our hearts, and weak our faith, and cold our love, if in these narratives of the past we cannot catch some glow of hope for the time to come. Is it that we love the world more than the kingdom of God ? Is it that we have no concern for the Creator's honour, and no desire for the glory of Christ, that we hesitate and stumble at these preludes of the great salvation, which shall be when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fires, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe ? If we had a more righteous abhorrence of sin, and a more intense longing for the coming of God's kingdom, for which we pray, and for the doing of His will on earth as it is done in heaven, it could not fail but that our sympathies would be drawn out by every revelation of God's wrath against unrighte-

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ousness, and every indication in His word or in His providence of the sure approach of the promised day when there shall be a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. To cherish such holy sympathy with God's righteous judgments, and to increase our hatred and our dread of sin, is the end for which these lessons in Holy Scripture are set before us. Our part is to receive them with humility and reverence, to contemplate them with that spiritual wisdom which is from above, and to give all diligence that in the day of the great visitation we may be found among the conquerors, not the conquered, and have our lot among the people of God in the inheritance of the saints in light.

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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## S A M U E L.

EVERY reader of these pages can doubtless call to mind a beautiful and touching picture in which the artist has striven to represent the youthful Samuel as he kneels at prayer. The child is on his knees by his bedside, his eyes are lifted up to heaven, and a divine light is shining on him, as if to shew that to those who give their early youth to Him, God will be in special manner a Guide, a Father, and Friend.

In this familiar picture, which is to be found on many a cottage wall, we see an indication, so to speak, of the whole future of Samuel's life. He was the child of manyayers, given to his mother in answer to the petition which she had asked of the

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Lord, and she in return devoted him as a freewill offering to God's service. "She vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. . . . Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord. . . . And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh. . . . And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, . . . for this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." It is in one of the cham-

\* 1 Sam. i. 11—28.

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bers which abutted on the sanctuary that the scene of this picture is laid, and an apt illustration it gives of the blessings of early piety. Samuel's life was to be spent in the service of God; therefore, like a greater than Samuel, he was in his heavenly Father's house "about his Father's business<sup>b</sup>." His special work was "to minister unto the Lord before Eli," to open the doors of the Temple, to look after the sacred vessels, like the youthful acolytes of the Primitive Church, girded, as our own choristers are, with a linen ephod.

In this early dedication of Samuel there is a lesson which may well be learnt by Christian parents, reminding them that their children "are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord<sup>c</sup>." In spirit the resolution of every mother should be that of Hannah: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." From the example of Samuel himself, too, Christian

<sup>b</sup> St. Luke ii. 49.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. cxxvii. 4.

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children may be taught that if they would be kept from the evil that is in the world, if they would escape the scathing influence of temptation, if they would avoid the bitter reflections arising from a wasted and mis-spent youth, if they would not lay on themselves the heavy burden of future remorse, they must, like Samuel, "keep the guide of their youth, and forsake not the covenant of their God<sup>a</sup>." For they, no less than Samuel, are "given to the Lord," signed with the holy sign, bearing on them the mark of the great Captain of their salvation, "in token that hereafter they shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil."

But we must follow out the history of Samuel. Samuel was a Nazarite. Nazarites were of two kinds: those who took a vow on them for a time, engaging to abstain from wine and strong drink, to let their hair grow, and to keep themselves from all legal impurity, and those who took similar obligations in consequence of their being con-

<sup>a</sup> Prov. ii. 17.

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secrated to their Nazariteship by their parents. We have three special examples of this last kind of devotion in the Bible—Samson, Samuel, and St. John the Baptist. In the birth of each there was something remarkable and out of the ordinary course of nature. Thus the mothers both of Samson and Samuel were barren till it pleased God to open their wombs; and Elisabeth (besides this natural infirmity) and her husband were both well stricken in years <sup>e</sup>.

It is but reasonable to conclude from these examples that the devotion of a Nazarite child was not left to the mere impulse of his parents, but that in such instance God was pleased to give some intimation of His will.

Such was doubtless the case with Samuel. God had a great work for him to do, nothing less than to judge His people Israel, to be a witness for holiness and truth in the midst of wickedness and hypocrisy, to be a stern reprobate of vice, an avenger of the Divine displeasure.

And who could do this but one who was himself dead to the allurements of a wicked

<sup>e</sup> St. Luke i. 7, 18.

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world, raised above its temptations? It has always been so in the whole history of the Church, that whoever has left the impress of his mind on any age as a true reformer, has himself been a man of a severe and austere life. Elijah and Elisha in Old Testament story, St. John the Baptist in the New Testament, the voices of the old recluses ringing forth as it were from the solitary wilds of the desert in denunciation of the corruption of the Church and the world; the Nazarite garb, the unshorn locks, the raiment of camel's hair, the locusts and wild honey, the abstinence from wine, were but outward signs of the inward purification of those who would cleanse the temple of God.

Even such a work was Samuel's. Terrible days were those in which his lot was cast; whilst he was ministering to the Lord in the sanctuary, scenes were taking place which might well make the hearts of the godly sick, and their heads faint<sup>1</sup>. In the state, anarchy and confusion reigned, for “In those days there was no king in Israel, and every one did what seemed good in his

<sup>1</sup> Conf. 1 Sam. ii., iii.

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own eyes." Without, was war, the people in constant dread of their ancient enemies the Philistines ; within were venality, bribery, and oppression. In the Church, sacrilege, and that worst kind of corruption which made the nation retain the empty forms of religion when the spirit was extinct. Around the very sanctuary itself what wickedness was going on ! Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of the reigning judge and high-priest, made themselves vile, and their father restrained them not. Grasping at all they could get, they seized upon more than their due from the offerings of the people, whilst they gratified their licentiousness by lying "with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Can we wonder when we read, " Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord : for men abhorred the offering of the Lord." No worse calamity can happen to a nation than when the people are alienated from the profession of religion by the scandalous lives of the clergy. Alas ! the Church is not without such examples ; in the tenth century all

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over Christendom, in our own country before the Reformation, in France before the first Revolution, in Italy it is to be feared now, many have been and are still driven into infidelity by priestly scandals.

The first intimation which Samuel received of what God would have him to do, was given very early in life. “The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.” Precious, no doubt, because in consequence of the prevailing wickedness God had withdrawn His face from His people. Samuel did not then, we read, know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord revealed to him, that is to say, God had not then made any special revelation to him.

Another artist has depicted this remarkable scene. Samuel is seen rising up in his little couch as if wakened out of sleep by the utterance of the mysterious voice, listening in deep and awestruck reverence to the terrible message. This was the first trial of the future prophet. It put to the

\* 1 Sam. iii. 7.

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test his faith, his obedience, his moral courage. How touching is the simple narrative of the child running from his sleeping-place to the aged priest, saying, "Here am I, for thou didst call me," and Eli's answer, "I called not, my son, lie down again." Then the conviction dawns upon Eli that it is no mere child's fancy, but that "the Lord had called the child." How beautiful is the impression conveyed by the direction of Eli, "Go, lie down again: and it shall be if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Samuel believed, Samuel obeyed, but what a trial was it to tell the awful message! Eli was his faithful friend, his monitor, his more than father. How well he had instructed him, whatever his weakness to his own sons, the entire narrative is a witness. Eli represented to the youthful Samuel all that was sacred, all that was holy, all that was venerable. Eli was to Samuel what some aged minister of God may have been to us when we were children, one endued by a child's simple reverence with virtues far beyond those which grow in

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reality on the frail tree of erring humanity. To say anything to grieve one so reverenced, must have been a great trouble to Samuel. And yet though he feared, as well he might, to tell Eli of woes and judgments impending on his house, the awful inheritance of sacrilegious wickedness which should not be "purged with sacrifice nor offering for sin," yet do we read that "Samuel told Eli every whit, and hid nothing from him."<sup>h</sup> In this moral firmness, how plainly do we see the germ of that noble character which made Samuel the upright judge, the witness for God, and for truth, and for righteousness.

We are not surprised after this to learn "that Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground," and that "all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." Nor do we wonder that under this righteous guidance "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed Himself in Shiloh by the word of the Lord."<sup>i</sup> And though heavy disasters were impending, for the cup of

<sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. iii. 14.

<sup>i</sup> Ib. 19—21.

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the iniquity of Eli's house was full, and the sanctuary and shrine of Shiloh were laid waste, it is but in accord with what we might expect of Samuel, to find him urging on a national repentance after the ark of God, the symbol of the Divine presence, had been restored; for "Samuel," we read, "spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines<sup>k</sup>." Nor are we surprised that his influence was so great that again and again the children of Israel entreated him to cry unto the Lord their God for them, that He would save them out of the hands of their enemies. Good and holy men are often misunderstood and misrepresented; they are called hard names, unworthy motives are imputed to them, but in the long run truth and righteousness prevail. God rewards them at last not only with the testimony of their own consciences,

<sup>k</sup> Conf. chaps. x., xii.—xvi., &c.

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but with the approbation of the good and the true. He fulfils His own promise, “Commit thy way unto the Lord ; and put thy trust in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noonday<sup>1</sup>. ” It was the same faithful, obedient, God-fearing, God-trusting, self-distrusting man who in after life calmly resigned the government, which he had executed so long and so nobly, into the hands of the new king whom the people had chosen, with no jealousy at the thought of being himself superseded, though very jealous for the honour and prerogative of the Lord God of Israel. The same unflinching regard for duty characterized the prophet in every other recorded act of his life ; witness his going forth to meet Saul when, impatient of delay, the monarch had sacrilegiously offered a burnt-offering himself, not waiting for the oracular response of God. “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God which

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

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He commanded thee, for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

The character of Samuel is consistent throughout. The child who, in spite of the violence to his own feelings, told to Eli every whit of the Lord's message, is but "father to the man" who could tell the vindictive Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft," (what a prophetic warning to his auditor!) "and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king;"—who refused to return again with the king, or to go and see him, when to do so was to compromise duty, and yet

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who mourned for Saul, bewailing his mis-government as he had that of Eli and his sons. The same faith and obedience too are shewn in his instant compliance with the command of God to take the sacred horn of oil, and looking not on the countenance or the height of stature, aware that God regarded the heart, to anoint the youthful shepherd, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite.

If it be true, moreover, that our state in the world of spirits is but an expansion of what we are here below, there is an identity between the shade summoned from its resting-place and the living Samuel. Saul, perplexed and troubled, deserted by God's Spirit, is permitted by the Almighty to call up Samuel from Hades. The old man cometh up covered with the prophetic mantle—and what did this terrible apparition reveal? There is the same truth-telling boldness in the message from the unseen world which had characterized all the Prophet's words and deeds:—"And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and

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God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done to him, as He spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines <sup>m.</sup>" In death as in life, in the shades of Hades as in the busy world, in the quiet precincts of the Temple as on the seat of judgment, the character of Samuel is consistent and of a piece throughout.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Sam. xxviii. 15—19.

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As it has been beautifully remarked, “In that first childlike response, ‘Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,’ was contained the secret of his strength. When in each successive stage of his growth the call waxed louder and louder to duties more and more arduous, he could still look back without interruption to the first time when it broke his midnight slumbers, when under the fatherly counsel of Eli he had obeyed its summons and found its judgments fulfilled. He could still, as he stood before the people at Gilgal, appeal to the unbroken purity of his long eventful life. Whatever might have been the lawless habits of the chiefs of these times, Hophni, Phinehas, or his own sons, he had kept aloof from all. ‘Behold, I am old and grey-headed, and I have walked before you from *my childhood unto this day*. Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord.’ No ox or ass had he taken from their stalls, no bribe to obtain his judgment, not even so much as a sandal. It is this appeal, and the universal response of the people, that has caused Grotius to give him the name of the Jewish

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Aristides. And when the hour of his death came, we are told with a peculiar emphasis of expression that *all* the Israelites, not one portion or fragment only, as might have been expected in that time of division and confusion, were gathered together round him who had been the father of all alike, and lamented him, and buried him not in any sacred spot or secluded sepulchre, but in the midst of the home which he had consecrated only by his own long unblemished career, in his own house at Ramah<sup>n</sup>."

Such was Samuel, "the chief type," as the same writer observes, "in ecclesiastical history, of holiness, of growth of a new creation without conversion; and his mission is an example of the special missions which such characters are called to fulfil." Samuel's wisdom and influence were the direct results of that keeping of self which is the invariable characteristic of holy youth. Men who have sinned, and sinned deeply, have, indeed, at various times been converted to God, and so been enabled to do Him service by magnifying that grace which has

<sup>n</sup> Vide "Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church."

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been shed so mercifully on them, but they commonly lack that calmness of judgment, that impartial wisdom which are the attributes of a whole life given to God. Samuel affords an instructive example of the great truth of God's providence both in nature and grace, that the after growth is but the result of the seed sown in early years. Waste the morning of life, and commonly the loss can never be redeemed. The honourable old age of the hoary-headed counsellor to whose words of ripe wisdom a nation listens, is but the natural development of the boyhood of the wise and truthful youth whose conscience forbade him to do wrong at school. We have but few records of the schoolboy days of our greatest and best men, but the rule here spoken of is all but universal. The boy who cheats his schoolfellows and deceives his master only needs time and opportunity to become a fraudulent merchant, and he who resists temptation in early life has in him the germs of all true nobility and greatness. The child who looks you fearlessly in the face, and frankly confesses a fault, regardless

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of consequences, has in him all the elements of Christian heroism. The young man or young woman who dares to pray when all else are prayerless, who ventures to rebuke levity and profanity, is ready to do any work whatever for God should He give the call.

Viewed as a public man, Samuel the Prophet may be regarded as the type of those special instruments whom God ever and anon raises up to do Him service. Viewed in his private life, Samuel is an example of heavenly wisdom and human prudence directing their possessors into that path of the just of which the volume of truth declares, "That it is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Two short years ago our Church and nation mourned the loss of one to whom the Queen and people ever looked, and not in vain, for judicious counsel and advice. It pleased God to remove him, but who dares to doubt but that He will in His own good time supply the need. Wherefore let every true-hearted Englishman earnestly pray, that in the perplexities of political affairs, in the strange complications in which

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our statesmen may be engaged, amid the elements of strife which may even now, like the clouds before the storm, be gathering prior to their bursting forth, God will raise up a Samuel to advise the Sovereign, and to suggest counsels of peace. Let Christian parents give up their children to the service of God, training them to worship Him in the courts of His temple ; let children remember that they are Nazarites, separated from the world, whose pomps and vanity they pledged themselves at their baptism to renounce, bound to subdue the flesh whose sinful lusts they engaged to mortify, and rescued from the service of Satan, whom and whose works they promised to resist. Let this be the course of the youth of our land, especially in our schools of the prophets, our "seminaries of sound learning and Christian education," and then may we rest assured that "there never will be wanting an order of men duly qualified to serve God both in Church and State." Then, indeed, will God teach His senators wisdom, and it will be seen that "no people are so great as those which have the Lord for their God."

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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### GOD'S ESTIMATE OF THE LIVES OF THE JUDGES.

THE period of the Judges has been not unaptly called the heroic age of Hebrew history, the age, that is, of physical superiority as distinct from moral influences. To enter at all into it, we must imagine a most unsettled state of society, in which every man is "fighting for his own hand," and of which, personal displays of individual valour are the most striking and prominent characteristics. We hear, indeed, every now and then, that the land, or a portion of it, had rest for a certain period of years; but of this rest we have no detailed description. It seems rather to be the lassitude ensuing on some great border contest, than any established and

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settled state of tranquillity. We wait a very little while. There arises before us some new phase of oppression or of rapine. It is avenged or terminated, not by the efforts of a mighty nation, by concentrated force and matured resolve, but by a sort of *guerilla* warfare, which reminds us of the struggles of later days in Switzerland, in the Tyrol, or in the Spanish Peninsula. Men are raised up for each emergency, whose bodily prowess and daring hardihood seem almost those of the fabled personages of classic story. These lead their countrymen to victory, or personally assail their oppressor. Thus Eglon is lording it over Israel: an Ehud is found who will penetrate into his palace, and despatch him in his inmost chamber. Thus Jabin is mightily oppressing God's people: straightway the captain of his host is sold into the hand of a woman, and those who had been at peace with him become his betrayers and murderers. Thus, under some forms of servitude, weapons of offence are forbidden. An ox-goad or the jawbone of an ass becomes in the hand of some stalwart cham-

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pion an instrument of destruction to an army. "While a staff or a hempen stalk grows in the fields," (says an eloquent writer on the subject,) "or a smooth stone lies in the brook, the oppressed ones are furnished with artillery."<sup>a</sup> Such are the prominent features of this disordered period, and such are the chief figures who appear on its foreground. They are called indeed *Judges*, but, with some few exceptions perhaps, we are not especially struck with their character in this point of view. We are more struck with finding them occasionally men of craft and subtlety, occasionally men of licentious lives, occasionally men of cruelty and rapine; and in all cases, men of a lower standard of practice than the general tenor of God's law appears to sanction, and than our instructed moral sense can approve.

We should feel no difficulty in passing our opinion upon this as upon every other uncivilized or heroic age, (for unhappily these terms are all but synonymous,) were it not for the following considerations. We

<sup>a</sup> Blunt, "Undesigned Coincidences," p. 124.

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are dealing with the Word of God, with the records which He has caused to be preserved for us and for our learning. We cannot approve of many of the acts of the persons chronicled, yet what do we read of those persons? In the first place, Samuel tells the Israelites, in one of the lessons<sup>b</sup> appointed for this day, that they received their commission from God. "The Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, (who is possibly Barak or Samson,) and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies, and ye dwelled safe." And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>c</sup> enrolls "Gedeon, (or Jerubbaal,) and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthae, and Samuel" in that great army of martyrs "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises." And again, we are dealing, at least in the case of the former of these two passages, with a portion of Scripture appointed to be read especially "when most people be gathered together."

We are placed therefore, so it would

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. xii. 11.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. xi. 32, 33.

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seem, in this very distressing dilemma. *If* we approve of the character of the Judges, and of all the acts of even the best among them, we go counter to our moral sense.

And, *if* we presume to censure these men of old, we fear we may be reversing the sentence of the great Discerner of hearts. Straightway these words occur to us, “It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth<sup>a</sup>? ”

It is proposed in this Tract to offer a few suggestions which may aid us in these difficulties. They will serve, if not to remove them entirely, at least to calm our minds, and to divert us from the bold conclusions which some have ventured to deduce from these and similar “hard things” in the annals of the Old Testament.

But to our subject.

It must be admitted at the outset, whatever results seem likely to follow from such an admission, that the morality of the Judges, on the whole, was not such as the Lord of conscience can contemplate with approval. He who “is of purer eyes than

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 33, 34.

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to behold iniquity" can never see violence, and lust, and cruel habitations without anger. The covenant-keeping God can never be pleased with treachery. He who is a jealous God is necessarily provoked at idolatry. Yet still, allowing all this, we may find a way of regarding the Judges, in which they are to be considered "worthies" and heroes of the faith. We may find that for God to employ even such persons as they were, on singular and special missions, is not unparalleled in Scripture, but rather according to the analogy of faith. And we may find further, that it is no less compatible with His ordinary dealings with mankind, that if they accepted His singular and special missions in strong and ready faith, and wrought them out with zeal and diligence, He should reward them, as He rewarded faithful Abraham.

The condition of the children of Israel from the time of the death of Joshua till at least the accession of Saul, was in many respects most miserable. "The Lord was indeed their King," but His presence was not visible, or, if visible, was local only, confined to the ark

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or the tabernacle. For all practical purposes the saying of the historian is correct, "There was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes;" an expression which points at once to a widespread perversion of morality, and to an absence of anything like a strong government. Their sins led them into slavery. From slavery they had to be redeemed by war, and all its accompanying discomforts. In the words of Deborah's painful confession, "The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through bye-ways; the inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel."<sup>6</sup> Generation after generation this state of things went on. Education, and even domestic care, ceased. Engaged as he necessarily was in warfare, and uncertain whether he might not be, in an unguarded moment, deprived of house and home, the father had no time to teach his son in the ways of God, even were he disposed to do so. The son grew up in his turn, in the midst of great and even greater difficulties, a person quite as occupied, and from his own lack of

<sup>6</sup> Judges v. 6, 7.

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instruction, less likely to instruct his descendants. And so things went on. At length the fear of God became the exception, and ignorance of His law the rule. The whole nation became deeply demoralized, and even the most worthy members of it were to a great extent affected by the general demoralization. Their low moral standard was doubtless in itself, and in the abstract, displeasing to the great Author of morality. But He does not estimate men in the abstract. He estimates them according to the opportunities they have possessed, and according to the uses which they have made of them. Do they act up to His law, so far as they know it? Do they walk uprightly, so far as the dim light about them and around them permits them to do so? By the answers to these questions He determines their final condition. Thus deficiencies which would be, and are, inexcusable in us, might not prevent the acceptance of men who, like the Judges of the Israelites, were in darkness indeed, but still to a certain extent walked as children of light.

This, then, is our first position. The  
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Judges having been imperfectly instructed in the Law, could scarcely have been expected to exhibit the high and pure morality which ensues on better instruction. They may therefore, according to God's general dealings, be accepted for obeying what instruction they had. What this instruction amounted to we shall see presently. We proceed, however, to lay down a second position which seems to be imperatively required in order to a right determination of the matter now before us. It is then, we conceive, a principle which may be fairly drawn from Holy Scripture, that God employs as His instruments in conducting the affairs of men persons who are to a certain extent such as they have made themselves, or such as their day has made them. He has, in the designs of His providence, works of a stern and ungentle character, which must be performed, and vengeance which must be carried into execution, as well as works of evident love and rewards of faithful walking. For these utterly diverse purposes He chooses in His supreme wisdom human agents of a diverse character. And

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they, sometimes consciously indeed, but for the most part unconsciously, are instruments to perform His pleasure. He does not, so far as we can discover, effect a change in their disposition, still less does He express approbation of those whom He thus employs, either wholly or even in particular parts of their conduct, unless indeed in those parts they have consciously acted under His command, and felt that they were obeying Him and not merely their own will.

This, then, will account for the fact that God employed for the warlike and sometimes relentless task of expiating His own and Israel's enemies, men of the fierce and almost savage nature which appears in some of the Judges. The office which was to be performed was such as demanded such agents. And it will at the same time teach us that He might use their passions and hardihood without sanctioning their general character in the abstract, or at all bidding us become, in any matter which our moral sense disapproves, the sort of men that they were. And this is perfectly compatible with the fact that some commendation is pronounced

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on these men. For, first, from whatever circumstances, they were superior to the age in which they lived; and secondly, which is much more to our purpose, they obeyed God's intimation conveyed to them on certain points, and obeyed it with earnest zeal. However imperfect, nay, let us speak boldly, however bad they were, on points whereon they were not informed, on these other they were comparatively perfect; God gave them a mission, and they performed it. They performed it with an unswerving faith, for that faith they are praised, and their names are in the Book of Life. That performance constituted their trial, and on their going through with it depended their final justification.

With these reflections to direct us, we may now admit readily, that in spite of their general character, the Lord, in the words of Samuel, might "have sent" the Judges, and that in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, those Judges might, "through faith, obtain a good report," supposing them to have wrought their work with patience. But let us further illustrate

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what is meant, by examining somewhat in detail the case of Gideon, the case of Jephthah, and the case of Samuel. These are mentioned in both the passages already quoted, and are obviously stamped with God's approval in both the stages of His revelation. By the light which will be thrown on the careers of these three men, we may examine Barak and Samson for ourselves. Who Bedan was, does not clearly appear in Scripture. The Chaldee paraphrast inserts Samson instead, as if he were Be-dan, or Ben-Dan, a shoot of the family of the Danites. The Septuagint read Barak, a name to whose constituent letters the letters of Bedan in the Hebrew bear no very distant resemblance. And others have found reason to identify this Judge with Jair. In this uncertainty of the name, it will be best to confine ourselves to those three distinguished leaders on Samuel's list about whom there is no uncertainty.

First Gideon comes before us. He was a man of the tribe of Manasseh, who had been brought up in the worship of Baal; his family were noted idolaters, and jealous

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of the dignity of their idol. Gideon it seems was attached to the false religion of his clan, but not so much so but that his heart was touched by the remonstrances of one of the prophets, and thus prepared somewhat for a further enlightenment. Be this, however, as it may, it was a perilous task for him to assail the dominant superstitions, and to stand forth as the asserter of a purer worship. Still, when God's word was revealed to him by an angel, and a miracle had confirmed the vision, no fears or prejudices of education could restrain him. He cast down the altar of Baal, and proclaimed himself the leader of Israel in the name of that truer God whose altar he had erected upon its ruins. Confirmed by another miracle, he became more valorous still, and more confident in his Divine mission; he saw his army diminished by degrees to the smallest possible number, though the Midianite troops were before him "as grasshoppers for multitude;" he had the simplest method of assault to meet their numerous hosts well fitted with munitions of war. And yet, with these and other discouragements in his way, he

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kept his mission in view, and conducted it to a prosperous termination. The thousands of the enemy were overthrown, their princes were slain with the sword, and Israel was enabled to dwell safely.

"The time would fail me, (says the writer to the Hebrews,) to tell of Gideon ;" that is, of the excellence of Gideon's faith, as displayed in his adventurous career. He was far, indeed, from being a perfect man ; there were serious defects in his character, which, viewed in the clear light of God's law, are manifest sins, and, had he been better instructed in it, would have been grievous sins in him. He went astray in the matter of chastity ; he went astray in allowing the golden ephod, which he had set up to commemorate his triumph, to become an object of idolatry. Of these things we cannot without impiety suppose the Almighty to have approved ; nor may we in these things consider Gideon worthy of imitation. But he used what light he had ; he walked, unscared by dangers, in the path which God had clearly marked out for him. And had he had further revelations, whether coming

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from within or from without, we may believe he would have been wiser and better. For his obedience then to what was revealed to him, if we may so far decipher the counsels of God, and the intimations afforded to us in His Word, and the feelings of our own hearts, we may suppose Gideon to have been commended by an inspired writer, and accepted (for His sake who is the cause of all acceptance) by that writer's Lord and Master.

And then there is the case of Jephthah. His early history speaks volumes of the immorality and social disorder which prevailed in his day. He was the son of an harlot, and had been thrust out from his father's house by his legitimate brethren: "And Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him." How long he led the careless and freebooting life which these words imply does not appear. But a change at length came over him. We find him 'captain over Israel against the Ammonites, and "uttering all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh."

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"Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah;" he became a champion for the faith and for God's heritage, and never ceased from his efforts until "the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel."

It was for this earnestness in his ascertained mission, it was because in execution of it "he waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens," that God accepted Jephthah. His rash and unhallowed vow, the no less rash and unhallowed performance of it which issued in the death of his daughter, (for we need not seek to explain this away,) his haughty and remorseless temper, were doubtless offensive in God's sight. But for these he found pardon, because, like St. Paul, he sinned in ignorance. In the chief trial of his life he found acceptance because he displayed faithful obedience.

The case of Samuel presents us with less difficulty. From his first calling to his death his character is more subdued and his morality is more pure than those of most of the Hebrew judges. But it is not

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even for this that his praise is recorded in the Old Testament, or repeated and confirmed in the New. Much less is he praised for his criminal indulgence to his sons, or for the exact manner of his accomplishment of the death of Agag. No, rather he is praised for faithfully performing his appointed mission; and apart from his excellencies or his defects, for this he obtained the testimony that, through faith, he was pleasing unto God.

We see, then, the reasonableness of the commendation given in Scripture to certain Hebrew chieftains whom God raised up from time to time for special and extraordinary services, whom He enlightened to see their duty, so far as those services were concerned, and whom He praised for faithfully performing them, without at all authorizing the more questionable portions of their conduct. Our method of considering the matter will relieve us from both the difficulties with which we commenced our enquiry. We are not bound to defend the morality of the judges in every, or nearly every particular, and thus our moral sense may escape offence

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and perplexity. And, again, though we censure some parts of their conduct, yet, if we imitate them in one part, their obedience to an ascertained commission from heaven, we estimate their course aright, we justify the judgment of God, we acknowledge them as our forerunners in the faith, we glean that lesson from their lives which (we speak it with reverence) God Himself intended us to glean.

It is quite a different question, why those who were selected for *special* services were not at the same time instructed in God's *general* will. Of course this cannot be answered except by the obvious method proposed by Bishop Butler. There are analogous difficulties in the world natural : the lightning purifies the air but destroys the harder substances with which it comes in contact: and again, all bodies are not endowed with all the qualities which we might suppose desirable. In spite of these difficulties we do not deny a Providence. Therefore, in spite of difficulties in the world of morals, we may not deny a Lord of conscience, a Discerner of the thoughts

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of the heart, a Judge of the quick and dead.

But to return more closely to our subject. This estimate of the acts of the Judges will guard us against that Antinomian error into which some fanatics fell, when they drew from the lives of these men an excuse for their own worst excesses. Their argument in effect was, “That all these men, Samson, for instance, or Gideon, were approved of God, approved in every particular, and that *he* pleases God most thoroughly who follows in the footsteps of His saints.” How fruitful in unclean living in the holder of such opinions, how utterly calculated to sap the very foundations of morality in weaker brethren such doctrines are, the history of the seventeenth century may prove, alas! too thoroughly. How entirely destitute of reason they seem to be, our previous considerations have shewn.

Again, we said that the points for which the Judges were praised were their earnestness, their faithfulness, their zeal. We said it, however, with this limitation, that those qualities were exhibited in the performance

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of the ascertained will of God, or an accredited mission from heaven. Nor is this limitation unnecessary. There is a sort of hero-worship abroad at present, an admiration or deifying of what the world calls earnestness or thoroughness, which totally overlooks, on the one hand, the ascertainment of a Divine mission, and on the other the righteousness of the end towards which such earnestness is directed. It is very liberal in its character, this hero-worship. It will embrace in its vast pantheon not merely Moses, as an earnest legislator, or Samson, as an earnest patriot, but Plato, as a high-toned moralist, or Alexander, as a determined conqueror, or Mahomet, as a ruthless propagandist, or Cromwell, as an unscrupulous leveller of the ranks and distinctions of society, or Montaigne, as a decided sceptic, or Napoleon, as a fearless and avowed man of the world. It will not pause to examine their credentials or weigh the lawfulness of their ends. You will recognise the doctrines to which we allude, and their chief asserters. But if you have at all followed the course of these remarks, you will

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allow that such are not the qualities for which the Judges obtained a good report, or for which the persons in question can be accepted at the great scrutiny of men's deeds.

Infidel writers have raised another cavil upon the platform which they think they have constructed upon the praise awarded in Scripture to the characters of men of old. They have urged, '*That* system cannot be true which exhibits the Author of our moral sense as permitting in any whom He commends an action which obviously contravenes it.' This argument we have confuted by anticipation. We have shewn that though God commends such agents, He commends them for obedience to His will, known and ascertained. He does not commend them for transgression of what, *if* a man is informed, is binding upon the heart and conscience.

We leave these matters to observe two things, and two only, in conclusion.

The Judges were praised for acting up to their knowledge. An analogous method of estimation will surely await ourselves. Let

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us beware, lest as the men of Nineveh will rise up and condemn the Jews of our Saviour's day, so these eminent servants of God rise up in the judgment with us, and condemn us. We may discover from what they were, with their imperfect information, what manner of persons in all holy conversation and godliness we Christians are bound to be. Let us imitate the faith of Gideon when he led his handful of men against the myriads of the enemy. We shall shew more zeal and activity against the enemies of our salvation than we are accustomed to do at present. Let us imitate the faith of Jephthah, when "he uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh." We shall live more constantly in God's presence, and become more careful of offending than we now are. Let us imitate the faith of Samson, who observed for many years the restrictions of his Nazarite vow; we shall be more careful than we now are in keeping our baptismal engagements. Let us imitate the faith of Samuel, who resigned his long-held power into the hands of God's anointed; we shall surely bring our thoughts, now often too

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proud and ambitious, into captivity to the law of Christ.

Again, the Saviour of the Judges, that Lord whom, not having known, they obeyed, is our Lord also. Through Him they were accepted; through Him their “faith was imputed unto them for righteousness.” May none of us, while *their* iniquities are pardoned, while they sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, find ourselves cast out! God has called and sent us to be Christian warriors more surely and more conclusively than He ever accredited them in their temporal commands. God has bidden us carry on our warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil, more decidedly than He bade them fight against Midian, or Ammon, or Philistia. And, though the strongholds of our spiritual enemies are mightier than those which are raised by “flesh and blood,” God has furnished us with proportionately greater strength to assail them. Shall any of us be found unmindful of our high and heavenly commission? Shall any of us fear to

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go out boldly and meet our foes? Or, if we fear for a moment, shall we fail to remember at length that One is on our side who "is of more honour and might than the hills of the robbers?"

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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### THE REJECTION OF SAUL.

IT is by no means the least striking of the internal evidences of the Divine origin of Holy Scripture, that the histories recorded therein are of such universal application. Belonging as they do to such very distant times, descriptive of men whose manners were so very different from those to which the inhabitants of the West are accustomed, most of them living what civilized nations of Christian times would designate a savage, at best a semi-barbarian life, their habits, principles of action, feelings, formed under such very different circumstances, we nevertheless find these men counterparts of ourselves; we see in their conduct just what we have need either to watch against as our own evil tendencies, or to admire as that to

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which our own better inclinations aspire. Such truth to nature as admits of this universal adaptation and application speaks of a higher origin than mere human intellect. Here is felt to be the impress of God's hand.

This remark is true of those stories which at first sight startle us as peculiar, and even sometimes repel us as seeming to contain something unjust, or unreasonable, or degrading. When year after year we hear read on Sundays those particular chapters in King Saul's history which form the First Lessons for these two Sundays, I suppose there are few of us who do not at times feel that there is something extraordinary about him, perhaps we can hardly help the occasional rise of a feeling that he was hardly dealt with. Again, when we read for ourselves the after pages of his life, we are disposed to think that he was either partially deprived of reason, or was so depraved in character that he is hardly on a level with ourselves.

A deeper study of his character as a whole, and a more thorough experience of human

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nature as seen in the world around us, with a reflection thrown on it from the working of our own hearts, will serve to correct much of this mistaken first impression. Saul's is a very common character. His behaviour was just what we might expect. The consequences to himself and to others were just what such behaviour in one occupying his position is sure to occasion, and his end is a fitting sequel to the whole. The whole scene is being acted over and over again in greater or less degree, according as the actors are more or less on the same footing with Saul ; the main difference is merely in our observation. In Saul's case we are, as it were, introduced behind the scenes. The interference of Almighty God, as commanding, assisting, withdrawing assistance, punishing, warning, rebuking, and forsaking, is specially set before our eyes. In our every-day observation of ourselves and our fellows we forget to notice this. The view we take, whether in our own opinion deeper or shallower, is, after all, but superficial. Almighty God in writing for our instruction teaches us to look to the secret springs of human

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actions, and at the same time lays open those springs to our sight.

There were two great offences which Saul committed, for which Samuel was specially sent to rebuke him, and to announce to him that on their account the kingdom was to be taken from his family. The first was, that instead of waiting for Samuel at Gilgal, he presumed with his own hands to offer a sacrifice. The second was, that when commissioned by God to extirpate the Amalekites, he spared their king, Agag, and allowed the people to bring away the best of the cattle. Were these solitary actions, standing out as distinct and different from his ordinary behaviour? or were they only specimens or samples of his usual conduct, more prominent perhaps because of the circumstances attending on them, but in keeping with the rest of his character? We shall perhaps best answer these questions by studying the two incidents, and his own language respecting each.

When reproved by Samuel on the first occasion, his defence was that there was no time to lose, the enemy were close at hand,

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and his own men were panic-struck; time was precious, and he was afraid the battle would come on before the service could be performed if he stayed for Samuel. He knew it was not quite regular; it went against him to do it; but he did not see how to help it.

On the second occasion he did not at first understand Samuel's reproof;—what had he done? He had done what he was sent to do, and as a proof pointed to Agag whom he had made a prisoner. As to the cattle, they were brought as a special honour to the Lord, that they might be offered to Him upon His altar, instead of being wasted by being slain on the Amalekite fields. 'Surely,' so he argues, 'I have done the very thing that I ought to have done; much better, in fact, than if I had literally fulfilled the injunction given me.'

Now one and the same principle pervades both these histories. Saul had a mind to attend to outward religion. He knew it was a proper thing; but he had no idea of being so very particular about little details. A sacrifice must be offered before the battle,

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it would never do to pretend to go without one ; and the Amalekites must be completely humbled, and the people slain, and their property taken from them. But religion as a reality, sacrifice as really bringing God's assistance to win the battle, or obedience to God's commands for God's sake, of that he knew nothing. So much so, that he never saw the folly of displeasing God by the way in which he did what was intended to please Him ; it never struck him that the sacrifice could be of no use if it was offered so as to excite God's anger instead of winning His favour ; and he never thought that God could really mean what He said when He desired him to slay every person and animal belonging to Amalek, or that it could matter so that there was a general obedience to the command given. He did not in the least intend to be disobedient, or to slight the commands of God ; on the contrary, he thought he was doing right and shewing great respect for religion.

The truth is, Saul never was a religious man. There is nothing in his whole history that bears on it the mark of a holy life,

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a heart touched with real love and fear of God. He was thoroughly respectable, as it is called; he had a high respect for religion, and probably for Samuel more than respect, something like real affection. But he had no notion at all of the fear of God as a ruling principle of conduct. Consequently he was very much wanting in reverence to God's holy things. For example, when he had called Abiah<sup>\*</sup> the priest, to enquire through him what God's will was, and then saw that the confusion in the enemy's ranks was increasing, he would not stay to complete the enquiry, but, as if it was an ordinary conversation, just bade him cease what he was doing,—“Withdraw thine hand.” And when Samuel at last convinced him that God was displeased at his conduct about the Amalekites, his only care was that he might not lose the good opinion of the people, and so he was very anxious that Samuel should go with him to worship, to give him the benefit of his countenance.

But though without religious feeling or principle, he owned the advantages of reli-

\* 1 Sam. xiv. 18, &c.

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gion, and would not for a moment neglect its outward observances. He was unwilling to go to battle, as we have seen, without first offering a sacrifice. When he heard of the confusion in the Philistines' camp, he called for the priest to make enquiry : when he found that God was displeased at the infringement of the oath which Saul had himself so foolishly charged upon the people, he was willing to sacrifice even his son Jonathan, of whom he was very fond, to make atonement. When Samuel extorted from him the confession, empty though it was, "I have sinned against the Lord," his first thought was to go to worship, as it were to make all things straight and smooth again by this act of outward religion. And much later in his life, when he was in such great difficulty from the power of the Philistines, he still goes to consult God ; but then sees nothing strange in trying to discover His will by means which were so abominable in God's sight, that even Saul himself had done everything in his power to discourage them.

In short, Saul was a person who had

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a great respect for religion as a thing external to him, he had a high opinion of its value as part of the machinery of government, but had no feeling of religion in his heart, was perfectly and wholly ignorant of it as a rule of conduct or as inspiring motives and principles of action, or as being really the presence of God among mankind.

Look at the world in any age, in our own. Look first at statesmen. ‘They are not going to say a word against religion ; on the contrary, it is a very proper thing to encourage religion. Religion is very useful in commanding the respect of the people, and in helping to maintain peace, quiet, and morality in the land. The ministers of religion are very useful servants of the State, and must be kept upon the side of the ruling powers. But religion must not put itself forward, or try to make itself felt as having authority of its own. The Church must not be allowed to complain of acts of the State as wrong in principle, e. g. of the appointment of an unsound theologian to a place of dignity ; the Church must not think to interfere with legislative enactments, e. g. as

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to separating those whom God has joined in marriage. Religion must be upheld, but one form of it is as good as another. There must be no such thing as asserting the special and primary claims of the Church as divinely organized, before the sects whose origin and organization is purely human.' Statesmen naturally fall into Saul's mode of feeling.

Look again at country gentlemen, peers or baronets, or whatever be their rank. They feel it right to shew due respect to religion; they will come to church once a Sunday, if the hour of service be not too early; their servants will come likewise; and they shew civility and attention to the clergyman. But as to ruling their households by God's Word, assembling them morning and evening for family worship, making arrangements that all the family shall have the opportunity of coming to Holy Communion, putting themselves out of the way to do spiritual good to the parish, this must not be thought of. If the bishop comes into the neighbourhood, due respect must be shewn to his rank and position, but

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as to working with him for the spread of real vital religion, for church building, increase of clergy, or the like, of that they have no idea. If one of the daughters is interested about the poor, or wishes to teach in the Sunday school, it is almost with difficulty that she obtains permission to attend to these things. There is a horror of anything like Methodism, or cant, or being righteous over-much.

And it is just the same as we descend in society. Look at the whole race of first-class tradesmen, merchants, &c., those who people the suburbs of our metropolis and are the gentry of our country towns and cities. They take their pew in church; but what if the minister of that church should suggest a deeper course of religious thought and action? what if he should suggest that their personal labour, the employment of their own time and energies in religious works for others, would be of incalculable benefit to themselves as well as to those on whom they would be bestowed? what if he ventures to ask for more than "a mite" out of their well-filled coffers for

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the poor, their souls and bodies? If their children shew signs of being touched in heart by a sense of God's love and goodness, are they encouraged to go forwards in good things, or hindered and hampered by parental interference?

And look at every branch of trade of what kind soever. Look at the men who conduct it and work in it. How different are they on Sundays and other days! On Sunday in church, professing to join in religious worship; sitting, at least, while God's Word is read, and perhaps His commandments enunciated one by one; and the next day immersed in the things of the world, with not a grain of religion in their conversation, or habits, or practices; setting at defiance God's commands and wishes, not pretending to control their tempers or their tongues, or their covetousness or their dishonest dealings, or their lust or their uncharitableness.

And need we be surprised that the example so set in the upper ranks is followed by the lower classes? Regular at church, distressed if anything is done which shews

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want of respect for religion, yet in all their daily life refusing to govern themselves by its laws and restraints.

Yet these men have no idea of being enemies to God. Not the least in the world. They fully think themselves just what they ought to be. They would not on any account give up religion. Nothing probably would offend them so much as any suggestion of the kind. ‘Give up religion? give up going to church? What do you take us for? Do you think we are heathens?’ It would be almost better if they would give it up; better to be cold than luke-warm. There would be some chance of startling them into something better. But they are so fully satisfied with their own comfortable condition and present attainments, that there is little hope of making an impression.

It is of no use to conceal from ourselves the certain truth that the consequences to Saul are only what we may call the natural consequences; that is, what those may expect whose character is like Saul’s. Such refusal to admit the principles of religion

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into the heart, or in other words, such want of love and fear of God, must of necessity provoke God to withdraw His Spirit. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Persons of this kind do not improve, and therefore of course go from bad to worse; not that they become profligate or outwardly depraved, but they grow to be utterly indifferent to God and His truth. They may at any moment find themselves, perhaps to their own surprise, arrayed on the side of indifference and infidelity against all that is good and energetic and living in the Church. They will probably blame the Church for being stiff and bigoted and unfair, and will persecute those who in earlier days were really their truest friends, because their friends yielded their lives to religious principles, while they themselves have resisted the strivings of God's grace in their conscience.

Religion is nothing, worse than nothing, a sham, a mockery, a cheat, if it is not to be the sovereign ruler of our feelings and conduct. Submit your life to its laws, and so you will be like David, a "man after

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God's own heart." Do not for a moment allow in yourself anything of that patronizing spirit which seems to think it a favour on your part to attend to religion, which tempts you to imagine that you do honour to religious works by joining in them; or that something is due to you because you either pay church-rates, or take so many sittings in a church and give money for them. Feel, or pray that you may feel, that everything is due from you to God, and that it is a great favour on His part to permit you to make Him any offering, and to accept with love and honour what He has a right to claim at your hands. Remember that you are not worthy to be allowed to think of God, much less to take part in any of His works: that He does you unmerited honour in permitting you to be His servant, in allowing your services to be devoted to Him as the services of a servant: and that when He goes so much further as to accept of you as a fellow-worker, a labourer together with Him in never so humble a capacity, at never so remote a distance, the least you can do is, like the sera-

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phim, to hide your face beneath your wings, while you devote your whole energies of body, mind, and soul ungrudgingly, to bend your head in lowly obeisance, smiting meanwhile on your breast as a “miserable sinner.” The lower you can abase yourself in your own esteem, the higher you shall rise before your Master; but oh! what an unspeakable honour, an honour to make us humble as we rejoice, and fear as we gratefully accept it, to be partners with God in His labours, to have the promise of reward, for that it is work “well done.” See that you be an obedient and a willing servant, wholly and not merely in pretence, “after the manner of dissemblers with God,” but given up to do His will. “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

# Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

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### DAVID THE PSALMIST.

“DAVID the son of Jesse said,  
And the man who was raised up on high,  
The anointed of the God of Jacob,  
And the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said,  
The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,  
And His word was in my tongue.”

2 SAM. xxiii. 2.

“THESE,” says the inspired author of the Second Book of Samuel, (probably Nathan the Prophet, who assisted at the anointing of Solomon, and therefore must have been cognisant of the last scenes in the life of David,) “These be the last words of David.” And the words are of themselves the solution of a great mystery. For how could the Psalms of David have been that which they are to all people, nations, and languages professing the faith of Christ,

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how could they have been food for meditation to all devout souls that have ever sought the consolations of the Holy Spirit, unless, as David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue?" There are ancient hymns no doubt in many languages, especially in some of the ancient languages of the East, which have continued among those nations in whose tongue they were composed, even when the original tongue has undergone various modifications, or has been supplanted by other tongues; but there is no other instance in which a volume of doctrinal poetry has adapted itself, and beyond doubt will continue to adapt itself, to the spiritual wants of nations widely separated by climate, by the customs incidental to climate, by descent and tradition; united, in fact, by no other tie than belief in the great Blood-sprinkling by which it has pleased God to gather together in one all His children, wheresoever dispersed on the face of the whole earth.

Inspiration is the only key to this mystery. It was the Spirit of God which spake by David. It was His word which was in

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his tongue. Had the sweet Psalmist of Israel described only his own sufferings in the songs which he composed, those songs would have lost their interest when the associations connected with them had passed away, even though the nation of the poet continued to be a nation, and the language in which the poems were written to be a spoken tongue, and the history of the events of the period to be still well known to the curious and the learned. Who would have attached such deep meaning to those words in the 41st Psalm,—“Yea, mine own familiar friend whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me,” if the Spirit of God, who caused David to write the words, had not plainly revealed by them things which yet lay hid in the darkness of the future? Indeed, it would not have required the intervention of the Divine Spirit to describe in those familiar words the treachery of Ahitophel. Would even the piteous description given in the contemporary history, how the King went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered and went

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barefoot, and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up weeping as they went up; and when one told David that Ahitophel was among the conspirators with Absalom, he meekly said, "O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness;" would even this description, (and there is no more affecting description in all history,) with the addition of the fact that the prayer was answered, and that Ahitophel's counsel was turned into foolishness, would all this have made those words in the 41st Psalm imperishable, apart from the prophetic force there is in them? Imagine how they who had the first-fruits of the Spirit under the New Testament dispensation must have felt when by His illuminating power they first discovered the close and exact correspondence between Judas and Ahitophel, first comprehended in this and other instances how holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost! What a flood of light must have poured into their hearts as they listened to the explanation of that passage in the 16th Psalm, "Thou shalt not

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leave my soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, when he shewed that it could not be written concerning David himself, who was both dead and buried, but must apply to the resurrection of Christ; or, again, as they heard the application of the words in the 2nd Psalm, "Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee," to the same event, in the sermon preached by St. Paul at Antioch. How they must have begun to perceive, as they compared Scripture with Scripture, person with person, character with character, that the royal Psalmist had been speaking of another and a greater than himself in many of those Psalms of which the true meaning had been sealed to them till now.

Now, too, they would understand words which, when their dear Lord first uttered them in their hearing, conveyed no such ideas as afterwards thronged into their minds; for instance,—

"The Lord said unto My Lord,  
Sit Thou on My right hand,  
Until I make Thine enemies My footstool."

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When Jesus first asked the question concerning these words, “If David call Messiah Lord, how is He then his Son?” His own disciples could no more solve the difficulty than the Pharisees to whom it was proposed. How different now that they were enlightened, and had tasted the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost! How the figure of David receded from their view to make way for his Divine Son! Words of Scripture once unintelligible, or irreconcilable with former expectations, assumed new proportions in the opening visions of futurity. They saw what Ezekiel meant when he foretold the blending of the two kingdoms into one again, and how the children of Israel should dwell once more in the land of their inheritance, they and their children, and their children’s children; “and My servant David shall be their prince for ever.” David Himself! The true David, of whom the Psalmist sung; and God, even their God, should be with them, and they should be His people; and the heathen would know that the Lord did sanctify Israel

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when His sanctuary should be in the midst of them for evermore.

Thus did the Psalmist foretell the future glories of his race. While he expressed in glowing language his confidence that God would never break the oath that He had once sworn by His holiness, "I will not fail David: his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me," he spake unconsciously, or with that consciousness it may be which accompanies the motions of the Spirit within, of the kingdom of Messiah the Prince. Nor did his songs flow always in a strain of triumph when he spake of Him who was for to come. His spirit, guided by the Divine Spirit into the mysteries of the future, foreboded the sufferings which were to precede the establishment of that glorious kingdom. He looked onward through the vistas of time, and beyond ages of darkness and sin beheld a Man, "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," bearing in His bosom the rebukes of many people, made as though He had sinned though He appealed to God to judge Him according to His integrity, brought into the dust of death !

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They who in aftertime sat down and wept by the waters of Babylon, and hung their harps on the willows by the river side, were full of sorrow when they were asked to sing the Lord's song in a strange land : but even they sounded no deeper grief of woe than David the Psalmist, when he wrote the 22nd and 69th Psalms.

“ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?  
Why art Thou so far from helping Me ?  
I am a worm, and no man ;  
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.  
Dogs have compassed Me :  
The assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me :  
They pierced My hands and My feet.  
I may tell all My bones :  
They look and stare upon Me.  
They part My garments among them,  
And cast lots upon My vesture.

Reproach hath broken My heart,  
And I am full of heaviness :  
And I looked for some to take pity, but there  
was none ;  
And for comforters, but I found none.  
They gave Me also gall for meat ;  
And in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.”

Oh ! marvellous prophetic song, in which

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every chord is touched which could melt human hearts with sorrow ! Oh ! strange reality of suffering then present, or past ; which yet was destined to have its final fulfilment in a more terrible reality of suffering in ages to come ! Where does the unbeliever take refuge from such words as these ? And yet he has a refuge. There are ways in which men pre-disposed to doubt can defend themselves against the force of any evidence, however strong and convincing. Oh ! for some of the first gushes of awakened feeling in those newly converted hearts on the day of Pentecost—if any remembered, while St. Peter was preaching the resurrection of the crucified Jesus, that their own sweet Psalmist in words long familiar to their ears had foreshewn not the resurrection only, but the agonies of the Cross !

But the man by whom the Spirit of God thus spake, in whose tongue was the Divine Word, was one in whom depth of religious sentiment was combined with a strong imaginative power. To him the works of God as seen in the visible creation were,

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equally with the past and future of his nation, subjects of profound and overwhelming interest. While he kept his father's sheep on the hills around Bethlehem, he had studied nature with an observant and intelligent eye. In the days when he gat the mastery over the lion and the bear, he had learned, no doubt, their haunts, their habits; their creeping forth out of the covert of the forest by night in search of their prey, their retreat at sunrise into their dens. He knew where the fowls of the air had their habitation; the distinction of their voices, their flight, their food, the seasons of their migration. It is no less evident from his writings that the marvels of the great and wide sea, "wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts," were also familiar to his thoughts. This may be gathered from other Psalms, if (as is most probable) the 104th was the work of another hand. In one Psalm especially, the 29th, the authorship of which is generally ascribed to him, and the time about which it was written not unreasonably conjectured, David writes as one profoundly

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sensible of the beauties and glories of creation. The description of God's power and majesty in that Psalm is in the highest strain of poetry, (may we not add of piety also ?)

“The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars ;  
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.  
He maketh them also to skip like a calf ;  
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.  
The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.  
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness ;  
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.  
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,  
And discovereth the forests.  
In His Temple doth every one speak of His glory.  
The Lord sitteth upon the flood ;  
Yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.”

But the most striking feature in the writings of David is without doubt his perception of the beauty of holiness. And in this also the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and His word was in his tongue. It was not of a man who had shed blood abundantly, and had made great wars, whose life had been spent in strife and perils, to understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity ; yea, every good

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path; to pour forth frequently such aspirations as this:—

“That he might dwell in the house of the Lord all  
the days of his life,  
To behold the beauty of the Lord,  
And to enquire in His Temple.”

But all this he had learnt by an excellent spirit that was in him; and it is this which is the peculiar charm of his writings. The 19th Psalm may be taken as an instance of this marvellous insight into moral beauty, and of the marvellous instinct by which he traced that beauty to its Divine Original, the Mind of God, through His works and word. The prayer with which the Psalm closes is a help to uninspired men to comprehend and admire words which came forth from lips, it must be remembered, to which the Spirit had given utterance. The Psalms of David have been the song of many in the house of their pilgrimage; have comforted sorrowful souls in all ages; have uplifted the hearts of the righteous, while they terrified the ungodly, and made them afraid out of their prisons. The language of the Psalms is in full accordance with the spirit

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of the New Testament dispensation. If any man taking exception to this assertion, instance the woes imprecated on Judas and his posterity in Psalm cix., let him ponder the words of St. Augustine;—“ Some not understanding this mode of predicting the future under the appearance of wishing evil, suppose hatred to be returned for hatred, and an evil will for an evil will; since in truth it belongeth to few to distinguish in what way the punishment of the wicked pleaseth the accuser, who longeth to satiate his enmity; and in how widely different a way it pleaseth the judge, who with a righteous mind punisheth sins. For the former returneth evil for evil; but the judge when he punisheth, doth not return evil for evil, since he returneth justice to the unjust; and what is just, is surely good.” Finally, when our Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh He established the truth of these writings; verified their prophecies; confirmed and enlarged their teaching; secured them to us an heritage for ever. There is no want of our spiritual nature which does not find satisfaction here. It is even

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according to the Psalmist's own word,—  
“The meek shall eat and be satisfied. They  
shall praise the Lord that seek Him:” i.e.  
devotion shall ever end in praise. “Your  
heart shall live for ever,” or, as the Chal-  
dee version expresses it, “The Spirit of pro-  
phecy shall rest in the thoughts of your  
heart for ever.”







